

Aspects of Roman History 82BC– AD14

**Swain, Hilary.,Davies, Mark
Everson.
Mark Everson Davies**

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82 BC–AD 14

A source-based approach

Hilary Swain and Mark Everson Davies





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ASPECTS OF ROMAN HISTORY, 82 BC–AD 14

Aspects of Roman History, 82 BC–AD 14 examines the political and military history of Rome and its empire in the Ciceronian and Augustan ages. It is an indispensable introduction to this central period of Roman history for all students of Roman history, from pre-university to undergraduate level.

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- Covers the lives of women and slaves, the running of the empire and the lives of provincials, and religion, culture and propaganda.
- Offers both a survey of the main topics and a detailed narrative through the close examination of sources.
- Introduces students to the problems of interpreting evidence, and helps develop the knowledge and skills needed to further the study of ancient history.

Written by experienced teachers, *Aspects of Roman History, 82 BC–AD 14* is an invaluable aid to note taking, essay preparation and examination revision.

Hilary Swain and **Mark Everson Davies** teach Ancient History at St Albans School, which won *Good Schools Guide* awards for the subject in 2004, 2006 and 2007. Mark Everson Davies has worked for OCR since 2002 as Reviser and Principal Examiner in Ancient History.

ASPECTS OF CLASSICAL CIVILISATION

ASPECTS OF ROMAN HISTORY, 82 BC–AD 14

A source-based approach

Mark Everson Davies and Hilary Swain

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A source-based approach

Terry Buckley

ASPECTS OF ROMAN HISTORY, AD 14–117

Richard Alston

CLASSICAL LITERATURE

An introduction

Edited by Neil Croally and Roy Hyde

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A source-based approach

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In teaching History, there is always a major problem to be confronted: there isn't any date at which you can begin. You try to start with a given year, but in order to understand what happened then you need to find out the background to the events of that year, which might mean going back decades. In the same way, it is hard to say when this book actually started to be put together. There are a number of people who should be thanked for what happened before the writing of this book, who deserve acknowledgement no less than those who have helped us in its actual making.

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We also need to thank a man we have never met, the estimable Bill Thayer. His *Lacus Curtius* site (to be found at www.penelope.uchicago.edu), among its other treasures, not only offers easy access to translations of many of the ancient sources but goes one better than similar sites such as Perseus by offering evidence that all translations found on the site are out of copyright.

Without such a service, books such as this that refer to a variety of ancient sources would be faced with either not using quotes at all, quoting from the original languages, which would render the book inaccessible to large numbers of students, using the authors' own translations, which would make it harder for students to find for themselves where quotations come from and study the contexts, or paying out so much in permissions as to make the whole exercise financially unviable from the authors' point of view. All translations in the book, if not from the sources referred to below, are from the translations collected in *Lacus Curtius*.

Quotations from D. R. Shackleton Bailey's translations of Cicero's letters are by permission of Penguin Books. Many thanks are due to Melvin Cooley for permission to use translations from the LACTOR series, details of which are to be found in the Bibliography; wherever a source appears in translation in a LACTOR, we have used that translation. We also thank him for alerting us as we were starting to write the book to the forthcoming publication of his wife Alison Cooley's essential new edition of Augustus' *Res Gestae*, which came out just in time for us to read before our book was due for completion.

The map of Italy in the Roman Republic, from Thomas Wiedemann's *Cicero and the End of the Roman Republic*, is reprinted by permission of Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd. The map of the Roman Empire in the first century BC, from Adrian Goldsworthy's *Caesar*, published by George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd, is reprinted by permission of the Orion Publishing Group. Thanks are due to Cambridge University Press for permission to use maps of the Roman Forum and the Forum of Augustus from Pamela Bradley's *Ancient Rome: Using Evidence* (2000).

Melvin Cooley further deserves our thanks for reading sections of the book and trialling them with his students at Warwick School, and for his detailed and helpful comments. Rather than using the standard mendacious formulation that all remaining errors of judgement are our own, we shall say that we thank him for spotting mistakes, for changing our minds on occasion, and above all for showing such intelligence in his objections that we have been forced to improve our arguments where he has disagreed with us but we still remain of the same view, the last being the best service of all. Thanks are also due to Peter Reason of Gorseinon College for trialling parts of the book with his students, and to the two referees for Routledge for their reviews, which again have forced us to improve those sections of the book on which they commented. Our own students at St Albans School, particularly the class of 2010, have given excellent feedback and both anticipation of and reaction to their glee in finding mistakes and instances of obscurity have kept us on our toes.

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J.H.S.
M.E.D.

My love of Ancient History began when I chose to study two Roman History options as part of my History degree at Cambridge. I was fortunate indeed to be supervised by the redoubtable Joyce Reynolds, and also to attend Michael Crawford's inspirational lectures on the Roman Republic. As a History teacher, I thought I had left the Romans behind, except for the occasional first-form project, until I came to St Albans School and was asked to teach the subject at A level. It has been gratifying and exciting to watch the number of Ancient Historians steadily growing and to despatch students each year to pursue the subject at university.

I would particularly like to thank my family for their support during the past year. Chris, Kate, Caroline, Neil and Glynis have been unfailingly cheerful and encouraging when I wished that I had never started this project but realised that I was too far into it to bail out. Their culinary skills improved significantly as my absences from the kitchen became noticeable during the summer. My parents-in-law and friends have also given me the gentle encouragement I needed to keep going and see the project through to the end.

My husband, Chris, ably assisted me in all technical matters that exceeded the abilities of an Ancient Historian, drove many times to the University Library at Cambridge to return imminently overdue books and mastered the subtleties of the Newton catalogue on my behalf. He also never wavered in his belief in me. In this, as in everything, his support has made all the difference.

Thanks must also go to Max, my constant companion through it all, a calming presence amid the collapse of the Roman Republic.

J.H.S.

In keeping with the principles set out at the start of these acknowledgements, I thank first of all my father for creating in me, by genes or environment or both, a love of the classical world; before he started his A levels, he went with two schoolmates into his headmaster's office and would not leave until he allowed them all to study the full range of classical subjects in the sixth form. My mother too, and all the family, here and in America, have been unfailingly supportive.

The outstanding ancient historians at University College, London, must be thanked not only for putting on a stimulating day for teachers of Ancient History in June 2009, hopefully the first of many, but also for generously allowing me and other teachers on that course membership of their library.

I have many personal debts and acknowledgements to make. I thank my sons, both Joe, and Michael who has borne the brunt, for putting up with their father's inability to spend enough time with them this year. I thank our neighbours for their tolerance in not reporting us to the council or, possibly, the police this year over the state of our garden. Above all, my greatest thanks are due to my wife, Diane who, knowing full well from her own experience of writing dissertations how much time I would have to spend, encouraged me wholeheartedly in this project, even when anticipating that my contribution to housework would dwindle from pitiful to near zero, and, beyond all that, for

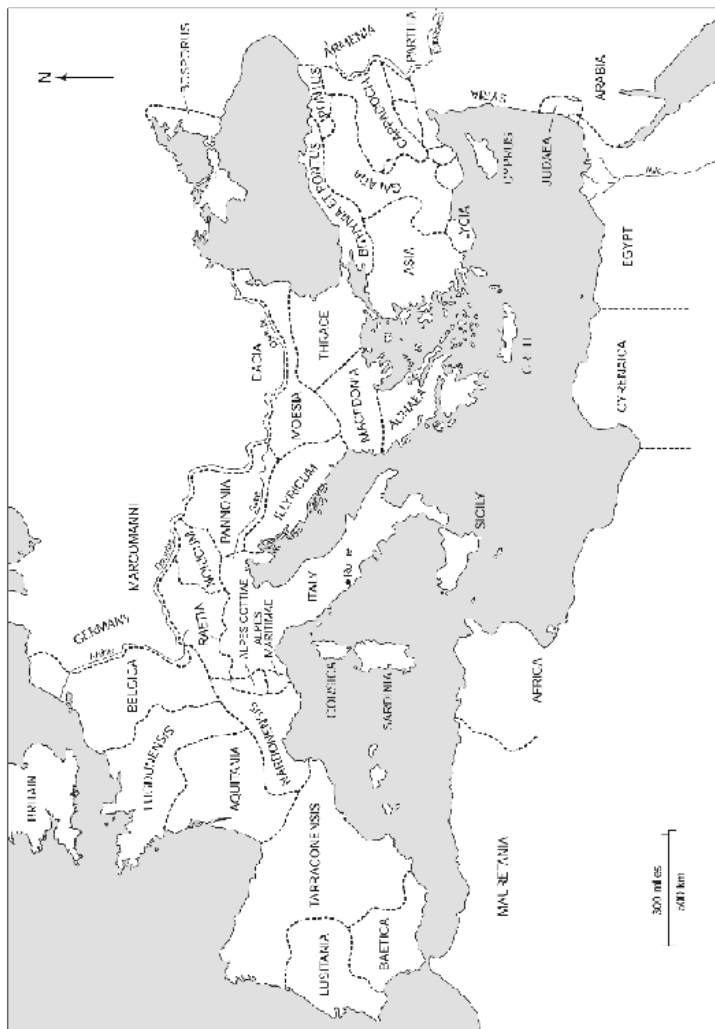


Figure 2 The Roman Empire in AD 14, adapted from David Shotter, Augustus Caesar (1991).



Figure 3 Italy in the first century BC, adapted from Thomas Wiedemann, *Cicero and the End of the Roman Republic*.

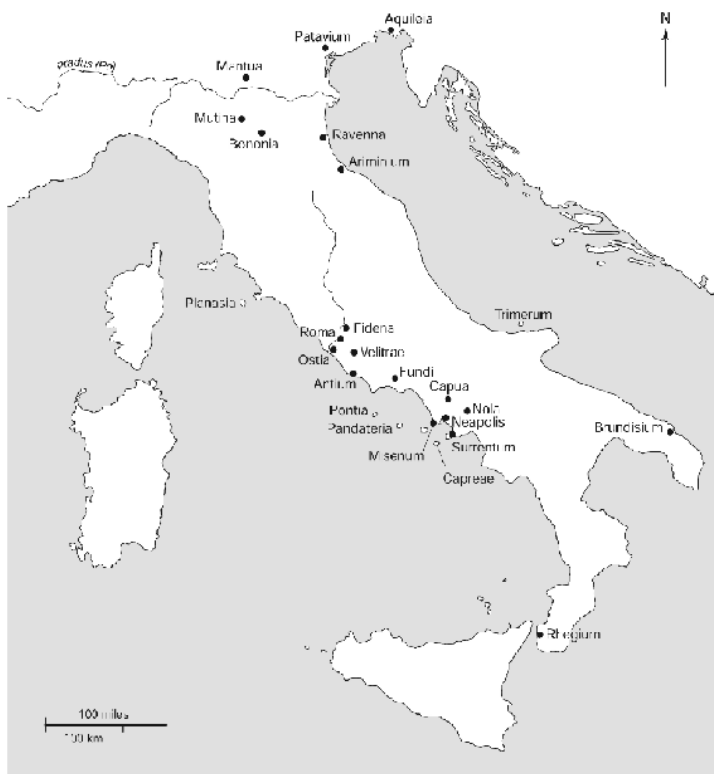


Figure 4 Italy in the age of Augustus, adapted from David Shotter, Augustus Caesar (1991).

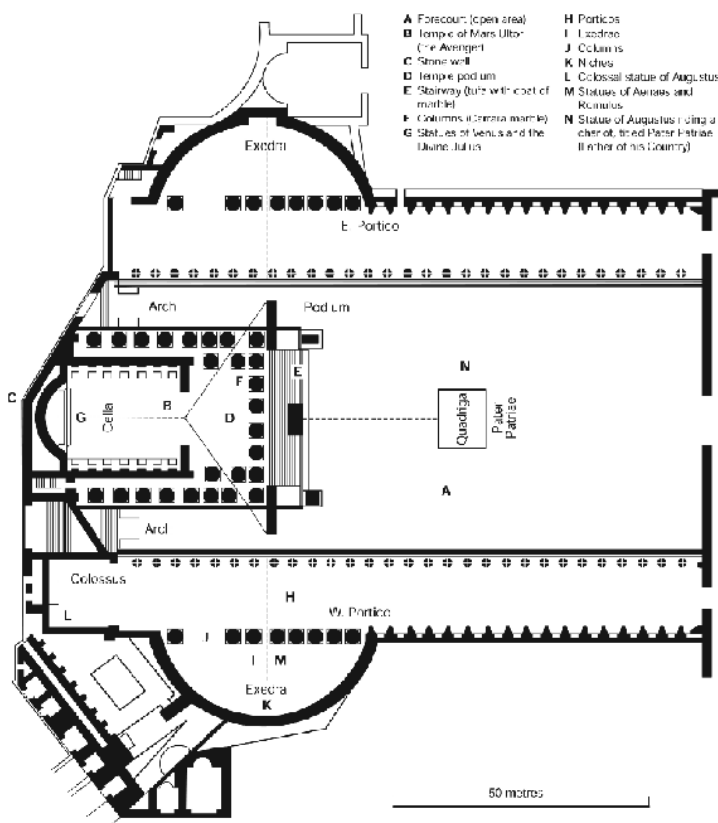


Figure 5(b) the Forum of Augustus, adapted from Pamela Bradley, *Ancient Rome: Using Evidence* (2000).

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Figure 6 Caesar sfamily,' from Richard Billows, *Julius Caesar, the Colossus of Rome* (2008).

1

INTRODUCTION

Aims

Terry Buckley's *Aspects of Greek History, 750–323 BC: a Source-based Approach* was published in 1996, followed by Richard Alston's *Aspects of Roman History, AD 14–117* in 1998. Both books were intended for an international readership and for students at school, college or university. However, they took as their starting point the specification for the UK examining board OCR's Advanced Level in Ancient History. Our book continues this series.

It is based on the new, post-2008, OCR specification but, like its predecessors, is intended not only for those taking the A level but for the many students in Britain who begin Ancient History at university and for students in other countries who are coming across this period for the first time. The book is not a text book in the narrow sense, in that it does not contain questions or exercises or suggestions to the teacher for lesson plans. It is an account of the period designed to be useful to those at the end of secondary or the beginning of higher education. We aim to provide an introduction that goes beyond an account of the main topics (a job done with brilliant success by David Shotter in his Lancaster Pamphlets *The Fall of the Roman Republic* and *Augustus Caesar*) and provides a narrative with some close examination of the sources, but without going into the level of specialist detail of, say, the *Cambridge Ancient History*.

The titles in this series reflect the fact that, in books of this scale, the range of issues and events included must be restricted if those that are dealt with are not to be treated too superficially. So the coverage of foreign and military affairs is selective: there is little on Caesar in Gaul or Antony in Parthia.¹ Social, economic and religious issues are all raised in this book, but we have followed the emphasis of the specification and focused primarily on politics, specifically the question of how power was gained and used. This approach might be criticized as old-fashioned. However, we would strongly defend it from a pedagogical viewpoint. The most important thing for a student at this stage to learn is the intelligent and critical use of sources. This is a challenging enough task when dealing with narrative history and well known individuals. When dealing with wider topics – class issues, the role of women, law and society – which are rightly prominent in later undergraduate and postgraduate study, there is a need to collect a very wide range of material and use archaeological and inscriptional evidence that needs expert and sophisticated interpretation. A student who starts with this kind of study will get a wide and balanced view of Roman society, but will have to take a great deal on trust and will not easily learn to become a historian. It also has to be acknowledged that, for many people, the initial attraction of ancient history is the famous individuals such as Caesar, Antony, Cleopatra and Augustus and the stories that are told about them.

We are secondary school teachers and our experience is of helping students coming across the study of ancient history for the first time to an understanding of the period. Our hope is that this book will help students to acquire the knowledge and skills to take their study of ancient history further and to engage with more specialist material. We regularly make reference to modern historians, sometimes because we feel that a historian has summarized a point particularly well, sometimes in order to indicate that there are different opinions on an issue rather than a single view among experts. There is not enough space in a book of this kind to include each historian's supporting argument, and students should not take a reference to an author's judgement as an indication that his judgement is beyond criticism. Where there is significant dispute among historians, we have not hesitated to express our own opinion, in the belief that this acts as a prompt to students to form their own views.

We start, as in both previous *Aspects* books, with a survey of the sources. After that we do not always give source references for factual information, although equally we have not restricted references to sources to points where there is particular controversy over the evidence: we feel that it is helpful to give students frequent reminders of where our information comes from. As with modern historians, a citation of an ancient author's words should not be taken as an invitation to students to accept those words uncritically. We have, however, selected for detailed comment certain passages where interpretation is difficult or which illustrate issues of evidence and source-criticism.

Like Alston, we end the book with some short thematic chapters. These are designed not to be full surveys, still less systematic introductions to particular theoretical approaches, but to provide summary and context to some issues that have emerged in the narrative section. There is an emphasis on the Augustan age in these chapters, reflecting the greater emphasis in the specification on issues of religion, propaganda, public buildings and provincials for that period than for the Republic, which in turn reflects the emphases in recent scholarship. However, the Republic is not ignored, and each chapter does contain an overview of the whole period.

The authors have each taken responsibility for specific sections of the book, and we have not attempted to guess each other's thoughts or imitate each other's writing style. Hilary Swain has written section 3 of this Introduction and [Chapters 2–10](#). Mark Everson Davies has written sections 1 and 2 of this Introduction and [Chapters 11 to 20](#). It is assumed that some readers will start at [Chapter 11](#) or at [Chapter 13](#), and so a little repetition is allowed at these points.

Dates are BC unless AD is specified. We use 'AD' because we live in the West; the abbreviations 'BCE' and 'CE', which claim universal validity for a specifically Christian and western dating system, are avoided.

Sums of money are given in sesterces: the *sestertius* was the accounting unit used by Romans even before the *sestertius* coin became common under

Augustus. Some books use *denarii*; there were four sesterces to the *denarius*.

Sources

There is enormous variation in the quantity and quality of the sources available for the different parts of the period covered by this book. Much has been lost: only extremely short summaries of the books of Livy that covered 82–89 survive. Just a few fragments remain from Sallust's full-scale history. There is very little source material indeed for the decade 80–70. From 70 onwards, we have Dio's narrative account, and most of the writings of Cicero.

There are certain cultural assumptions that colour the views of almost all of the ancient written sources. One is the Roman attitude of tremendous respect for the *mos maiorum*, the 'way of the ancestors', which led people to attack what they disagreed with as dangerously radical innovations and to misrepresent changes that they proposed or agreed with as a return to traditional virtues. It led, on the one hand, to exaggeration of the continuities in Roman politics and life and, on the other hand, to a sometimes hysterical fear of the new, which has the effect of making writers overemphasise conflict and change in accounts of this period.

Almost all writers believed that Rome was in a moral decline that started as soon as it became a Mediterranean power. The point of no return was believed to have been 146, the year when Rome destroyed the rich trading cities of Carthage and Corinth, leading to great wealth flowing into the city. This view leads writers to condemn the excesses of the rich. However, because of their privileged backgrounds, they are not very sympathetic to the poor in Rome, who are usually portrayed as an unthinking, self-interested mob.

Historians and biographers

Dio

Cassius Dio Cocceianus was born around AD 150 in Bithynia, south of the Black Sea, in modern Turkey, and wrote in Greek. He was consul twice and an adviser to the emperors Septimius Severus and Caracalla. His familiarity with senatorial and imperial power is both an advantage, in that he had an understanding of politics and access to the Senate's records, and a disadvantage, because he can look at earlier periods through the eyes of a politician of the third century AD. In particular, Dio often fails to appreciate the difficulties that Augustus had in establishing monarchical power in Rome after the collapse of the Republic, and how sensitively he had to proceed.

He followed the Roman tradition of annalistic writing, that is, dealing with events on a year-by-year basis. However, comparison with other historians or inscriptional evidence can show that he has been careless with his dates; sometimes, pursuing a thematic connection, he has placed events of a similar kind in the same year when other evidence suggests that they happened at different times.

Some of Dio's work survives intact and some of it survives only in summaries made in the eleventh century AD. We have, with a few gaps, complete books for the period from 69 onwards, making Dio's by far the most complete narrative account of these times.

Dio has often been treated with something close to contempt. It is true that he suffers badly by comparison with his fellow Greeks, the great fifth-century BC historians Herodotus and Thucydides. All three writers offer the reader their thoughts, both in comments that they make and in speeches that they put into the mouths of historical characters, something that ancient readers of history found a perfectly acceptable thing for historians to do. Herodotus gives us reflections on freedom and tyranny. Thucydides analyses, carefully but with intense feeling, how society breaks down into civil war. The longest speech that Dio gives us is largely concerned with the exact administrative arrangements for making a monarchy most effective and efficient. Dio wrote under the rule of the emperors, and his work indicates how the loss of freedom and responsibility shrinks people's minds; it is like turning from Lincoln's Gettysburg address to a town councillor's proposal for reorganising the planning committee.

Not only Dio's analyses but his statements of facts are often dismissed. For example, his assertion in Book 54 [chapter 10](#) that Augustus was given consular power for life in 19 is rejected in Scullard 1982: 215 with 'this must certainly be an exaggeration'; no reasons are given (compare and contrast Brunt and Moore 1967: 13–14; Levick 1976: 23). More recently, his statement (53.32) that in 23 'they gave [Augustus] in the subject territory authority superior to that of the governor in each instance', that is, in Latin, *proconsulare imperium maius*, has been robustly challenged (Cooley 2009:

35, with references) on the ground that the phrase *proconsulare imperium* does not appear before the reign of Tiberius, although it seems clear that Augustus did overrule governors in the provinces. Although, as noted above, Dio can be careless with dates, even this has been exaggerated. For example, he writes about Egnatius Rufus' activities when he was an aedile in chapter 24 of Book 53, in the middle of an account of the events of 26. However, he is not claiming that Egnatius Rufus was aedile in 26 rather than 22, which is the year attested elsewhere; he is making a comparison between the behaviour of two other men, Agrippa and Gallus, in 26 and Rufus' behaviour at a slightly later date.

In our opinion, Dio's value as evidence should not be underestimated. The same speech, on the administration of a monarchy, which shows the narrowness of his historical analysis also indicates one of his strengths as a source. He had a great interest in the minute details of politics: what powers were given to particular people, what duties were expected of them. Changes in the constitution, and the ways in which power changed hands, sometimes openly and sometimes secretly, are central to the history of these times, and these are the things in which Dio was most interested and which he documents in some detail.

Appian

Appian was born around AD 95. He was a Greek from Alexandria in Egypt, and belonged to the wealthy equestrian class. He was a successful lawyer, and pleaded cases in Rome before the emperors. He wrote the *Roman History* around the middle of the second century AD. His focus was on war, and among the surviving parts of his history are five books on the civil wars from the murder of Tiberius Gracchus in 133 to the defeat of Sextus Pompey in 36.

Appian is quite perceptive about the realities of power in this period, and he is much better at writing about military matters than Dio; however, he can be very casual about dates. While all ancient historians felt free to give historical characters speeches that may have been more exciting than those that were actually made, Appian sometimes even allows himself to rearrange events to create more drama. This is especially noticeable in his account of the days that followed Caesar's murder: in almost every case where his order of events is different from that in Dio, Plutarch or Suetonius, the effect is to create more dramatic suspense or contrast. Appian has to be used with caution.

In this book, all references to Appian are to the *Civil Wars* unless specified.

Velleius

Velleius Paterculus was born in 20 or 19. He served as an officer under the future emperor Tiberius. He became a senator in AD 7 and praetor in AD 15. He wrote a short history of Rome, from the legendary beginnings to AD 30, in just two books. He writes in more detail as he gets to Augustus, but never as fully as Dio or Appian, although he is the only surviving historian whose work covers our whole period.

Velleius is a representative of those people who did best under Augustus and later emperors, the upper classes in the towns of Italy and southern Gaul. His family came from south of Rome and became citizens only after the Social War of the early 80s. His account is completely supportive of Augustus and Tiberius. At first, readers may feel that there is something refreshing about a man who owes his opportunities to a new political system openly supporting that system. Later writers from a similar background to Velleius who had enjoyed similar success – especially the second century AD historian Tacitus, who wrote about the period after Augustus' death but who is referred to a number of times in this book – are extremely hostile to the emperors and show nostalgia for the days of the Republic, when the senators would have despised them as small-town upstarts and they would have had little hope of any kind of political career in Rome. However, Velleius quickly tries the reader's patience. He supplies us with some valuable information, but he always gives the 'party line', and we know that his judgements are often not sincere. His comments on Varus, who was defeated and lost three legions in Germany in AD 9, illustrate this clearly. Velleius is consistently critical of him, but before the disaster Varus was close to Augustus and Tiberius and had enjoyed a glittering career, so it is obvious that if Velleius had written his history before AD 9 he would have praised him enthusiastically.

Plutarch

Plutarch was born around AD 45 and died around AD 120. He came from Boeotia in Greece, north of Athens. He did travel to Rome and received honours from the emperors, but he always lived in Boeotia and occupied himself with local politics. He wrote parallel lives of Greeks and Romans, most of which have survived. Among these lives are those of Marius, Sulla, Sertorius, Crassus, Pompey, Caesar, Cicero, Brutus and Mark Antony. Some demonstrate strong biases: in particular, he is strongly anti-Caesar.

Plutarch considered himself to be a philosopher. He is interested in character and personal morality, which is why he writes biography rather than narrative history. This can have a distorting effect on his judgements. An extreme example is his explanation of why Syria was added to the Roman Empire in the late 60s. For Plutarch, this was entirely because of Pompey's desire for glory. He ignores the dangerous weakness of the kingdom of Syria, the risk of its becoming a base for pirates and the strategic importance of its coastline. Military, diplomatic and political explanations are ignored; there is almost nothing about the Senate as a whole.

Nevertheless, Plutarch researched carefully and he has preserved a great deal of information that would otherwise have been lost, especially for the earlier part of our period.

Suetonius

Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus was born around AD 70 into the equestrian class. He knew the right people and became director of the imperial archives under the emperor Trajan and secretary to the emperor Hadrian for the first two years of his reign (AD 117–19), after which he was sacked for involvement in a scandal concerning the emperor's wife. His interests were wide-ranging: one lost work was called *Lives of the Whores*. He wrote *The Twelve Caesars*, biographies of Julius Caesar and the first eleven emperors. His life of Julius Caesar (which is incomplete) and life of Augustus are, of course, of the greatest value to a student of this period, but there is also useful material in his biography of Tiberius, and those of Virgil and Horace in his brief *Lives of the Poets*.

Because of his position, Suetonius had privileged access to very valuable documents, including letters of Mark Antony and Augustus. He is mainly concerned, like Plutarch, with personal character. He organises his biographies thematically rather than chronologically and he is frustratingly uninterested in dates.

In this book, all references to Suetonius are to his life of Julius Caesar, unless specified.

Sallust

Gaius Sallustius Crispus was born in 86 in Sabine territory north-east of Rome, at Amiternum, high in the Apennine mountains, near modern L'Aquila, and died in 34. His family were powerful locally but he was a *novus homo*, the first in his family to enter the Senate in Rome. He was a strong supporter of Caesar and rose to become governor of Numidia in North Africa, as a result of which, allegedly because of corruption on a huge scale, he became very rich. He is very biased in favour of Caesar's views and against the nobility and those who wished to preserve the exclusive power of the Senate. After Caesar's death, Sallust turned to writing.

Unlike the historians and biographers mentioned so far, Sallust was a contemporary recorder of events. Unfortunately, only two of his works survive in their entirety, *The Jugurthine War* and *The Catilinarian Conspiracy*, although some tantalising fragments remain of the five volumes of his *History of Rome from 78 to 67*. Because of this, in the period covered by this book Sallust is an important source only for the events of the year 63. There is a detailed discussion of *The Catilinarian Conspiracy* in [chapter 5](#).

Although he is selective with the facts and his work also contains inaccuracies of chronology, Sallust's books were popular, memorable as much for their melodramatic style as for their content. Tacitus (*Ann.* 3.30) called Sallust 'the most illustrious of the Roman historians' and his writings earned him the fame that had eluded him in his political life.

In this book, all references to Sallust are to *The Catilinarian Conspiracy*, unless specified.

Non-historians

Cicero

SPEECHES

Cicero was born in 106 at Arpinum, about seventy miles East of Rome, and was killed in 43. The details of his political career will be given in the following chapters. Although he is overshadowed as a politician by the larger-than-life figures of Pompey, Caesar and Mark Antony, he was close to the centre of power and this makes him a witness of enormous value. He is one of the greatest of Roman writers; he wrote poetry and philosophy as well as speeches.

A large number of Cicero's speeches have come down to us. Most of them are for the defence, although his most famous speech, the one that established him as the greatest lawyer in Rome, was for the prosecution of Verres in 70. Some of his speeches were made to the Senate or People. Most involve political issues and powerful politicians.

There are many difficulties with using Cicero's speeches as evidence. First, it is always uncertain how the published speeches relate to those that were actually spoken: the written version of his speech defending Milo in 52 is known to be quite different from the speech that he made in court, and some speeches, such as most of those against Verres and the second *Philippic* against Mark Antony, were never delivered at all. Second, we never have an opposing speech. Third, Cicero's aim is to win over the Senate or the jury and so he appeals to their emotions, fears and prejudices; sometimes, in order to do so, he almost completely ignores the charges in a court case and launches a shamelessly irrelevant attack on the other side, most notoriously in his defence of Caelius in 56.

LETTERS

Cicero's letters to his friend Atticus (*ad Atticum*), his brother Quintus (*ad Quintum fratrem*), Brutus (*ad Brutum*) and other friends and acquaintances (*ad familiares*) are an exceptionally valuable resource. They were not intended for publication, but were gathered together after Cicero's death by his loyal freedman Tiro. They are not complete: almost all were written in the period 63–43, some have been lost, and others, for example from the very end of his life, were never published, possibly because publication was too dangerous. Some letters to political allies and rivals give little away, but many of the letters give us Cicero's thoughts, without 'spin', and with all his changes of mind and heart. Naturally, some are hard to understand because Cicero and his correspondent shared knowledge of something that is obscure to us. The letters tell us about events in Rome and, sometimes, elsewhere, but above all they give us an insight into the life of a Roman politician: the favours done, the friendships and enmities, the dinner parties, and the constant concern with money and property.

They must, of course, be handled with care. It is not surprising that Cicero himself communicates in his letters his belief that he became the leading man in Rome in late 44 and early 43. It is, in our view, extremely surprising how many historians have agreed with him.

Caesar's Commentaries

Julius Caesar wrote accounts of his wars in Gaul from 58 to 50 and of the civil war between him and the supporters of Pompey from 49 to 45. The first is probably based upon the reports that governors engaged in war were expected to send to the Senate. The last book of the *Gallic War* was written by his supporter Hirtius after his death, and the accounts of the fighting in Egypt, Africa and Spain in the *Civil War* were also written by others.

Caesar wrote in a plain, clear style appropriate for a general and man of action. He was an eye witness to most of the events that he describes. Of course he writes to exaggerate his successes and downplay or hide anything that does not reflect well on him, but his simple trick of writing in the third person ('Caesar did this ...') all too easily makes the reader forget that he is writing about himself.

The Res Gestae

The *Res Gestae* is very interesting as a source, although it is less than fascinating to read through. It is a summary of Augustus' 'achievements' (*res gestae*), written by him, inscribed in bronze and placed in front of his mausoleum, the burial place of Augustus and favoured members of his family. It is typical of Augustus in that it is attempting to be both something traditional and Republican and something unique that shows how Augustus is greater than anyone who has ever come before him. It is clearly linked to the inscriptions that Roman nobles and other prominent men had carved on or near their tombs, listing the offices that they had held and their main achievements. There were also inscriptions in praise of famous men on other monuments, such as columns and, interestingly, in statues on Augustus' own Forum, built in the year 2; these were longer than the funerary inscriptions, but nothing like as long as the *Res Gestae* or so full of detailed statistics. Another influence was the decrees made by Eastern communities in honour of individuals and inscribed on stone. Naturally, Augustus had also taken account of the inscriptions set up by Eastern kings and emperors; he is subtle in presenting anything that suggests a claim to monarchical power, although those who made a Greek adaptation for inscription in the Eastern province of Galatia were less delicate (Cooley 2009: 29).

The *Res Gestae* gives an account of the military successes achieved by Augustus or by those who served under his overall command and of the money that he spent on the gods and the people. The two are connected, since the victories provided him with the money: compare, in the inscription on the tomb of Plancus, consul of 42: 'Plancus ... having triumphed over the Raetians built the temple of Saturn from the spoils' (*ibid.*: 31).

Other writers

Aulus Gellius published around AD 180 a great collection of facts and stories taken from his reading, called the *Attic Nights*. **Frontinus** lived c. AD 30 to 104, and was a highly successful politician, becoming consul three times. He was Water Commissioner under the emperors Nerva and Trajan and wrote a highly informative book, *The Aqueducts of Rome*. **Livy** (59 to AD 17) wrote a vast history of Rome from 753 to AD 9, a patriotic and moralising work. He lived under Augustus, but shows some independence. For our period only the briefest of summaries of his original work remain. **Macrobius** wrote in the fifth century AD an imagined dialogue between scholars, in which many topics are discussed, including the jokes of famous people. **Pliny the Elder** (died AD 79) wrote some works of history that have not survived, and there is some, not very critically reported, historical information in his *Natural History*, which contains, he tells us, 20,000 facts. **Seneca the Younger** (died AD 65) was a believer in Stoic philosophy and a politician, who became tutor to the future emperor Nero and tried in vain to teach him to be an ethical ruler. He wrote philosophical works in the form of letters and dialogues. **Valerius Maximus**, like Aulus Gellius and Macrobius, was a compiler, who made a collection of ‘memorable deeds and sayings’ during the reign of Tiberius (AD 14–37). **Varro** (116–27) wrote extensively on all aspects of Roman history and traditions. His *On Agriculture* is complete, but most of his works survive only in fragments. **Zosimus**, a Byzantine historian of the fifth and sixth centuries AD, wrote a brief and muddled history of Rome which nevertheless preserves some useful information.

Other documentary and physical evidence

Inscriptional evidence is very limited for the Republic, although it starts to become more plentiful from the beginning of Augustus' political career in 44. When using inscriptions as evidence, it is essential to take account of the context. Inscriptions may be political decrees; they may be written on public buildings, on tombs, under statues. The meaning of an inscription may be affected by the buildings or public spaces around it.

Coinage is plentiful for the whole period, and not only in Rome but throughout the Empire. Coinage is very valuable evidence because it is dated and because the coins in themselves are part of history: because of their wide circulation, they often carry propaganda messages. We refer to these a number of times in the book. The same is true, of course, of statues and other works of art, of which much fewer survive.

Archaeology has told us a great deal about the city of Rome, but for this period evidence for the rest of Italy and the Empire is scanty. Archaeological evidence, like written evidence, has an unavoidable bias. Public buildings survive in the greatest numbers; the private buildings of the poor very rarely leave any trace. The durability of jewellery, precious metals and fine pottery also ensures that evidence for the lives of the rich is more plentiful.

For the *Guide to Electioneering* attributed to Quintus Cicero, see [Chapter 4](#). For the poets **Virgil**, **Horace**, **Propertius** and **Ovid**, see [Chapter 18](#).

Background

Rome and Italy

The fertile plain of Latium was chosen as the site of Rome. Volcanic activity had produced a group of seven hills which were easy to defend and an island in the middle of the River Tiber made it easy to bridge. There was also good access to the sea. The first settlers of Latium were Indo-European Italic tribes who entered Italy in several waves between 1500 and 1000 BC, although there were other civilisations already in Italy, the Greeks to the south and the Etruscans in Etruria to the north. The Etruscans became dominant in the peninsula, expanding their power during the seventh century BC and spreading into Latium, where they founded the city named Ruma. Many religious and political aspects of Rome derived from the period of Etruscan dominance which ended in the sixth century BC.

In Roman myth Aeneas, son of Venus, who had fled the siege of Troy, settled in Latium and became the founder of a line of kings. His descendants Romulus and Remus, the twin sons of Mars, decided to found a city but quarrelled; Romulus killed Remus, and became the first king of Rome. Six further kings followed, of whom the last three were Etruscan. They became increasingly despotic and the seventh, Tarquinius Superbus, was overthrown by the people, led by Brutus. The traditional date was 509, and the Romans set about developing a republican system, guided by the principle of *libertas*, individual freedom, to ensure that no one man could wield *regnum*, kingly power, over the people again.

The institutions of the Republic

When the Republic was established, only those descended from the most noble families, the patricians, were eligible to rule, and a system was developed whereby power was shared among them according to the principle of *primus inter pares*, first among equals. Each man's personal ambition was checked by adherence to a ladder of office, the *cursus honorum*, which established a system of shared and time-limited political offices, known as magistracies, and imposed a two-year gap between successive magistracies and a ten-year gap between repetition of the same office. This system was formalised in 180 by the passage of the *lex Villia Annalis*.

The Senate, a body of about 300 until the late first century BC, consisted of representatives of the main families in Rome. It advised the magistrates and issued decrees, *consulta*, which had to be approved by one of the People's Assemblies (see below) to become law. The senatorial elite, about twenty families, could claim ancestry from the founders of the Republic; the members of any family with a consul in its history were known as *nobiles*. These families increasingly grouped themselves into factions to enable their members to dominate political life, and political friends, *amici*, and friendships, *amicitiae*, were made to oil the wheels and to exert influence. Politics was a family affair and the family's reputation, *fama*, was vitally important. Family resources were poured out to ensure ongoing political influence, and there was an expectation that successive generations would continue to develop their own and their family's *dignitas*, the prestige that came with office and success. Families built up links with clients, usually poorer citizens within Italy and the provinces, whose support could be counted upon in elections, and *do ut des*, 'I give in order that you may give back', bound patron and client together in a system of mutual advantage. It was particularly difficult for a man to succeed in Roman politics if he came from a family with no acceptable political credentials. A new man, a *novus homo*, would need important connections and powerful patronage to overcome the disadvantages of his birth and it was unlikely that he would be accepted socially by the senatorial elite. He would also need to demonstrate outstanding ability; both Marius, who excelled in the army, and Cicero, who excelled in the courts, were *novi homines*, new men.

From within the ranks of the Senate, annually elected magistrates ran Rome and its Empire. The most important of these were the two consuls who held *imperium*, supreme authority. They were accompanied by twelve lictors, attendants, who carried the old Etruscan symbols of authority, the *fascēs*, rods and an axe bundled together. The consuls wore the *toga praetexta*, a toga with a purple border, and presided over the Senate, organised the annual elections, commanded armies in war and were expected to carry out the will of the Senate. The office of consul was greatly prized and the aspiration of most

senators, but competition was fierce and became much fiercer in the late Republic. The next most important magistrates were the praetors, six originally and eight after Sulla, who also held *imperium* and were attended by six lictors. Some praetors concentrated on tasks within the city such as presiding over the courts, others dealt with matters of foreign policy. Both the consuls and the praetors were elected by the *comitia centuriata*, which met on the Campus Martius outside the city, and which also decided between peace and war and could act as a court of appeal. Citizens voted in their military centuries, traditional rankings determined by their age, their class, but particularly their wealth. There were 193 centuries, but the poor were restricted to thirty. The centuries of the richest citizens voted first and dominated the electoral process, and often the poorer centuries did not vote; in 64 Cicero was declared consul after only ninety-five centuries had voted.

The lesser magistrates were the aediles and quaestors. There were four aediles, two plebeian aediles elected by the Plebeian Assembly (see below) and two patrician aediles called curule aediles who had right to sit on a curule chair, an ivory stool used by the most important magistrates. The curule aediles and the quaestors were elected by the *comitia tributa*, another gathering of the citizen body, where they voted in their original thirty-five tribes, thirty-one rural and four urban, to which all citizens were assigned. Each tribe would register a collective vote but, as members of the wealthy landed class could often control entire tribes through their clients, their influence in elections again dominated. The four aediles were granted *potestas*, the power to carry out the requirements of their office but without the prestige and freedom of action of *imperium*. The aedileship was an opportunity for an aspiring politician to attract attention as the aedile's responsibilities were usually carried out in Rome. These duties, which included the regulation of traffic, the water supply and the public festivals and games, were decided by drawing lots, and therefore there was little difference between the curule and plebeian aediles by the time of the late Republic.

The first rung on the *cursus honorum* was the quaestorship. There were originally eight quaestors, increased to twenty by Sulla, who acted as administrators. Quaestors held *potestas*, oversaw the Treasury, kept public records within Rome and could act as assistants to governors or as paymasters on military campaigns. The minimum age for holding the quaestorship was originally twenty-seven. Sulla increased this to thirty, so any aspiring politician would have previously served in the army or in the law courts, or in both, before he embarked upon his political career.

Every five years two censors were elected. These were usually ex-consuls, or 'consulars', who remained in office for eighteen months and took the census of the population but also regulated the senatorial roll and could expel any senators they felt were unsuitable. For times of crisis the Romans had established the emergency office of dictator, the only example of unchecked one-man rule. The dictatorship was a six-month appointed, not elected, office,

and the holder held the *imperium* of two consuls. He was assisted by a deputy, the Master of the Horse, who also held *imperium*.

The restriction of office to one year worked in normal circumstances but there were times, such as during a military campaign, when the *imperium* of a magistrate needed to be prorogued. Those whose power was prorogued were called promagistrates: proconsuls and propraetors holding proconsular *imperium* and propraetorian *imperium*; they were routinely used to administer the provinces abroad and would be appointed as governors after their term of office in Rome ended. Competition intensified in the late Republic as politicians vied not only for power but also for lucrative provinces. It became the norm to bribe members of a candidate's tribe to secure their votes and *divisores*, distributing agents, were employed to hand out monetary bribes, but banquets, games and donations also became commonplace during elections. The practice of politics was expensive in the late Republic and was usually funded by a combination of family resources and loans. A good province was greatly prized, as a promagistrate had the opportunity to extract enough money from the provincials to repay his creditors, refill the family coffers and feather his own nest during his governorship.

Senators, knights and people

Roman society was sharply divided during the early days of the Republic. The ruling class, the patricians, could trace their origins back to the early Republic and acted as the 'fathers' of the state. The remainder of Roman society were plebeians, who were originally excluded from all aspects of political and religious life in Rome. As the Republic bedded in and Rome engaged in wars within the peninsula, the plebeians became increasingly important as a military force without which the patricians could not rule effectively. The plebeians, many of whom had become as wealthy as their patrician masters, sought political, social and legal equality, and the two classes repeatedly clashed during a 200-year period known as the Struggle of the Orders. In 494 the plebeians gained the right to elect ten of their own officials, known as tribunes, each year. The person of a tribune was sacrosanct, inviolable, and the plebs bound themselves by oath to defend this tribunician sacrosanctity, with force if necessary, against any challenges made by patrician magistrates. The *concilium plebis* or Plebeian Assembly was established and its functions came to overlap those of the *comitia tributa*. Marriage between the two orders was legalised, plebeians were admitted to various priesthoods, and the Licinian-Sextian Laws of 367 specified that at least one of the consuls should be of plebeian origin. By the middle Republic the boundaries between the two orders had blurred, plebeian noble families had emerged, and intermarriage created an elite as exclusive and self-interested as the original patricians. The Hortensian Law of 287 gave the resolutions of the Plebeian Assembly, *plebiscita*, the binding force of law, and the ten tribunes gradually became more important in political life. They were elected by the *concilium plebis* and each one had the power of veto, *intercessio*, against the actions of fellow tribunes, laws, elections and decrees of the Senate. Their role was to represent the interests of the urban plebs and, increasingly, tribunes used the tribunate as a stepping stone to higher office. The tribunate was not on the *cursus honorum* but could be performed instead of the aedileship.

The Claudian Law of 218 forbade the senatorial class from engaging in commercial activities, but the expansion of the Empire had created many financial opportunities. Senators did involve themselves in business through agents, usually their freedmen or members of the class below known as the *equites* or equestrian order, the knights, many of whom had established successful businesses. They also now often lent the senators money. The *equites* had considerable resources but little direct political influence, and some were keen to have more. Tension between the *equites* and senators was a feature of late Republican Rome.

The great mass of Roman citizens living in the city outside the senatorial and equestrian classes was known as the *plebs urbana*. The lives of many were short and miserable; packed into inadequate and insanitary housing, they

lurched from poorly paid job to poorly paid job, encountering bouts of unemployment, high prices and food shortages on the way. Mouritsen (2001: 128) concludes that their role in political life was limited, as the system was, 'based on the few rather than the many'. Voting during elections took an entire day while the voters queued on the Campus Martius, usually only to discover that the votes of the poorer tribes or centuries were not required anyway; few of the *plebs* could afford a day off work to participate. Millar (1998: 14) argues that politicians recognised the people as 'the dominant force in the life of the Republic', but very few of the estimated one million who inhabited the city by the end of the Republic had the opportunity to exercise their voting rights. The poor took their problems to the streets rather than into politics, and food riots were common. Yavetz (1969: 39) concludes that 'democracy did not exist in Rome but popular pressure did', and it was this potential that Catiline and Clodius would attempt to exploit.

Roman religion

The Romans always sought *pax deorum*, peace under the will of their pantheon of gods, and believed that communication with the gods was achieved through prayer, sacrifice and divination. It could be achieved only if the state and the household both prioritised religious ritual. State religion was headed by the *pontifex maximus*, the chief priest, and priestly colleges looked after other specific areas of religious life. By the late Republic fifteen pontiffs acted as advisers and regulated the state calendar, and fifteen augurs interpreted the will of the gods by observation of the flight of birds. There were twenty *fetiales*, largely involved in matters of war, and fifteen *flamines* supervised individual cults, the three most important of which were Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus, the deified spirit of Romulus. Most leading senators were also priests, and political families shared the priesthoods among themselves, underlining the inextricable ties between politics and religion. Rome was littered with temples to individual gods where ritual, prayer and sacrifice took place, and the Vestal Virgins guarded the sacred flame of Vesta, the goddess who protected the city. At home the Romans worshipped, among others, the household gods, the Lares, and the gods of the larder, the Penates. Personal religious ritual was considered as important as state observance, and attempts were made by both Sulla and Caesar to revive state and personal religion after periods of political instability.

The Etruscans had surrounded each of their cities with a sacred boundary (*pomerium*) within which the inhabitants were believed to be under the direct protection of the gods. No one bearing arms was allowed to cross the *pomerium* into Rome except in the case of a Triumph, a great honour granted by the Senate to a general whose army had killed at least 5,000 foreign enemies during a military campaign. The returning army would gather on the Campus Martius, outside the *pomerium*, and then parade through the city carrying placards with details of lands conquered and enemies vanquished, accompanied by visible signs of victory such as prisoners in chains and carts loaded with booty and loot. The commander, riding on a triumphal chariot, wearing red robes and with his face painted – it is believed, to resemble the statue of Jupiter on the Capitol – took centre stage in the spectacle, but, lest he became too proud, a slave, tantalisingly holding a crown above his head, would repeatedly whisper in his ear, ‘Remember you are mortal!’ The scale of such Triumphs escalated during the late Republic, culminating in a four-day Triumph held by Caesar in 46.

The growth of the Empire

By 270 Rome had conquered the land from the Po valley in the north to the heel of Italy in the south during a series of allegedly defensive wars against the other settlers within the peninsula. It had established the Roman Confederation, which defined the status of those living within Italy as either citizens or allies. Roman citizens were originally those living in Rome itself and in various areas of annexed land and colonies around the coast. There were two ranks of citizens. Full citizens, *optimo iure*, possessed voting rights and three highly prized private rights: *connubium*, the right to marry and to inherit property, *commercium*, the right to buy and sell land fairly, and *provocatio*, the right to appeal against any act carried out by a Roman magistrate. Citizens without voting rights, *sine suffragio*, but in possession of the private rights, lived in communities called *municipia* and had local autonomy. Although citizens paid taxes and were expected to carry out military service if required, this status gave the individual a high level of personal and legal protection. A relatively small number of Rome's allies living in some Latin towns and in Latin colonies were designated Latin allies, *nomen Latinum*. This was a privileged status which stopped short of citizenship, as holders had no political rights, but they possessed *commercium* and *connubium* and full rights of local government; they also were eligible for military service and taxation. The majority in Italy, however, were Italian allies, *socii Italici*, possessing no political or private rights, and, although they did not pay taxes, they were eligible for military service in defence of Rome's interests. Both the Latin and Italian allies fought in separate divisions of the Roman army with their own commanders.

The armies of Rome had always been recruited from those who possessed land, as it was believed that a man with a stake in society would be prepared to fight harder to defend it. Rome had depended on peasant farmers, citizens and allies to form the backbone of its army, and there were many long military campaigns during the second century. Rome's main rival in the western Mediterranean was Carthage, originally a Phoenician colony on the North African coast. It possessed a large fleet and had conquered Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica and Spain. Three Punic Wars, from the Latin *Punicus*, meaning Phoenician, were fought between Rome and Carthage, the second of which was the most dangerous, as the armies of Hannibal invaded Italy in 218 and did not withdraw until 203. When the Third Punic War ended with the sack of Carthage and destruction of the Carthaginians in 146 their lands passed into the hands of Rome.

Modern northern Italy from the southern Alps to the River Rubicon was not in ancient times part of Italy. This area, known as Cisalpine Gaul, also became dominated by Rome, and was fully under its control after the Third Punic War. Another consequence of the Punic Wars was a worsening relationship

with the Macedonians, who had assisted Hannibal during his occupation of much of Italy. A series of wars between 214 and 146 culminated in the sack of Corinth and the annexation of Macedonia and the rest of Greece. In 168 Rome had also taken control of the area of Illyricum (Croatia and Albania), whose ruler had supported the Macedonians in the war. When Attalus of Pergamum died in 133 and left his kingdom to Rome they established the lucrative province of Asia. Rome had gained an empire and the Romans adapted their existing systems to rule the new provinces, but the promagistrates sent as governors had little supervision and soon the profits of the Empire were lining the pockets of the rich and delivering few benefits to the poor. Sallust (10) argued that the *mos maiorum* was damaged because 'growing love of money, and the lust for power which followed it, engendered every kind of evil'. Captured prisoners from Rome's wars were enslaved, and slavery became a feature of late Republican life. A profitable slave market was established on the Greek island of Delos to manage this lucrative trade. Many slaves in Italy were employed on large ranch-style estates, the *latifundia*, which replaced many of the small peasant farms of the earlier Republic. Their experience usually compared unfavourably with that of domestic slaves, particularly educated Greek house slaves working as doctors or teachers, but was preferable to the wretched lives of those forced to work in the state mines of Spain and Macedonia. The number of slaves in Italy is difficult to estimate, as they were inevitably omitted from official records, but it may well have been over a third of the population, and they posed a potential risk to order.

Another problem that accompanied the growth of empire was piracy. In 168, at the end of the Second Macedonian War, the Romans had destroyed the power of Rhodes, a prosperous island whose fleets had guarded and policed the Eastern Mediterranean. By the first century BC well-organised pirate squadrons based in Cilicia targeted Rome's increasing commercial activity throughout the Empire.

Threats from within: the Gracchi

By 133 Rome not only had serious social and economic problems but was also facing a military crisis. The growth of the Empire had led to an influx of wealth which was largely funnelled into the hands of the upper classes, who enjoyed a lavish lifestyle. They had financed a building boom in Rome but had also invested in land, particularly in *latifundia*, often encroaching on neighbouring *ager publicus*, public land, to enlarge their estates further. Peasant farmers returning from military campaigns had found it difficult to re-establish their holdings or to compete with the *latifundia*, and many sold up, usually to their rich neighbours. Some worked as tenants and, therefore, became ineligible for military service because they were no longer landowners, while others were unable to find jobs on the land because of the widespread use of slave labour and consequently drifted to Rome to seek work.

Rome had depended on its peasant farmers to make up the army, and the acquisition of an empire had significantly increased Rome's military obligations, but now there were fewer of them and recruitment became increasingly difficult. The allies, who were expected to fight for Rome but shared none of the benefits of citizenship, had become extremely discontented because of these increased military demands. The building boom came to an abrupt end in 138 and many in Rome found themselves unemployed, grain was in short supply and appalling living conditions intensified discontent. Although the Senate had shown assertive leadership during Hannibal's occupation, the ruling elite now seemed more concerned about competing for pre-eminence, wealth and lucrative provincial governorships and appeared indifferent to the serious problems that were developing.

In 133 Tiberius Gracchus became a tribune and introduced a controversial Land Bill, the *lex agraria*. It proposed that a three-man commission should be appointed to allocate portions of public land to landless citizens, who would pay a small rent. Their plots could not be sold and therefore could not fall into the hands of predatory larger landowners as in the past. Rome would reverse the decline in the number of peasant farmers, which would ease the problems of military recruitment and, in addition, many of the unemployed in Rome would be removed and rehoused. The Bill faced opposition from wealthy senators, as many had encroached upon large tracts of public land which they were reluctant to hand back. Although the Bill contained a provision that they could retain 500 *iugera* (about 325 acres) of public land each and 250 for each of two children, many landowners complained that they had fenced, improved and cultivated the public land; they had even built family tombs on it and intended to keep it. Anticipating their opposition, Tiberius Gracchus had introduced the Bill in the Assembly, thus bypassing the Senate, which traditionally framed legislation. As the senators appeared to have little interest

in the problem, he had taken an unconventional but legal route to pass this reform.

Tiberius Gracchus came from a very distinguished background: his mother was the daughter of Scipio Africanus, the conqueror of Hannibal, his father had been consul twice, and he was married to the daughter of Appius Claudius Pulcher, the *princeps senatus*, or chief senator. Some historians have portrayed Tiberius Gracchus as a genuine reformer who had become concerned and frustrated by the Senate's apathetic and self-interested approach to government, others have seen him as a power-hungry politician who recognised that the passage of this Bill would gain him many clients. Shotter (1994) has argued that he was an instrument in a factional struggle in the Senate between the Claudii and Scipiones. Whatever his motivation, the Senate reacted strongly to his tactics and used a pliable tribune, Octavius, to veto the Bill. Tiberius attempted unsuccessfully to introduce the Bill into the Senate, and then presented it again to the Assembly. It was passed only after force had been used to remove Octavius. Although the Senate refused to grant the funds necessary to implement the Bill, the money left to Rome by King Attalus of Pergamum was diverted for the purpose, again by decision of the Assembly.

Tiberius Gracchus had trespassed into areas of finance and foreign policy that the Senate had monopolised and had shaken them to the core; he became a marked man. No magistrate could be prosecuted during his term of office, therefore Tiberius sought re-election as tribune to protect himself. This was an unprecedented but not illegal move, as the office of tribune was not on the *cursus honorum* and not limited by the *lex Villia Annalis* of 180, but continuity of power was anathema to Republican principles. The Senate could not face the prospect and a group of senators, led by the *pontifex maximus* Scipio Nasica, sought Tiberius out and murdered him.

In 123 Gaius Gracchus, the younger brother of Tiberius, also became tribune and embarked on a raft of reforms, all of which were presented and passed in the Assembly without reference to the Senate. He tackled long-neglected areas such as the food supply, and his *lex frumentaria* used public subsidy to provide cheap grain for the plebs to prevent price fluctuations that could lead to hunger and discontent. He established colonies, new settlements of Roman citizens in Italy and the provinces to provide homes and opportunities for the unemployed, and also created jobs throughout the Empire such as in road building. Gaius rationalised the system of appointing provincial governors, and won support from the *equites* by using equestrian juries in the corruption courts and by establishing a system of tax collection in the wealthy province of Asia using equestrian *publicani* who tendered for the contract.

Gaius Gracchus sought and won re-election in 122 but then proposed to extend full citizenship to the Latin allies and Latin status to the *socii*, the Italian allies. This would have greatly enhanced his personal influence and

power but would also have tackled a potentially explosive situation. The *plebs urbana* had benefited from his other reforms, but they were unprepared to share the benefits of citizenship further and turned against him, and he was not re-elected tribune for 121. The Senate now took advantage of his declining support and passed a *senatus consultum ultimum* (SCU) against Gaius Gracchus. An SCU was 'the final decree of the Senate', a measure passed when Rome itself was considered to be in danger and which gave to the consul the powers to take whatever measures he felt necessary to restore order. A force of senators and *equites* was raised and Gaius Gracchus committed suicide to avoid capture. Three thousand of his supporters were killed or executed without trial.

The Senate murdered Tiberius Gracchus; they also, in effect, murdered Gaius Gracchus. Both men had introduced much-needed reform, but their use of the tribunate and the Assembly had been threatening and humiliating to the Senate. Cicero writes that the Senate now divided. Those senators who had firmly resisted the Gracchi, their methods and all they represented now became known as the *optimates*. They were always in the majority in the late Republican Senate, and determinedly sought to preserve and enhance its power and status. They were a cohesive and often ruthless group. Those senators who had been sympathetic to the aims and methods of the Gracchi became known as the *populares*. They firmly believed in the power of the Senate, but were open to an enhanced role of the Assembly and tribunes in public life. Some *populares* were genuine reformers but others would use the label *popularis* for personal advancement and to secure the support of the *plebs*.

Threats from without: Jugurtha, Cimbri and Teutones, Mithridates

The acquisition of an empire and the need to defend it increased Rome's commitments in the Mediterranean. In 118 the friendly ruler of the North African kingdom of Numidia died and a struggle for power broke out between his two sons and his nephew, Jugurtha. As Rome had developed business interests in the country the Senate reluctantly became involved and a Roman commission suggested that the country should be divided. Jugurtha rejected the scheme and murdered a large number of Italian traders in the capital, Cirta. The *equites* and plebs in Rome believed the commission had been corrupt and pressed for war, but the Senate's new negotiator, Bestia, handed the kingdom over to Jugurtha. A tribune, Gaius Memmius, became the mouthpiece of the furious *equites* and plebs and demanded immediate action. Very reluctantly, the Senate sent two commanders, Aulus and Albinus, but they lacked the military skill to defeat the wily Jugurtha, and were defeated and driven out of the country. The situation was extremely embarrassing for the Senate, and in 109 another tribune, Mamilius, forced them to investigate all those suspected of collusion or incompetence. Bestia, Aulus and Albinus were all exiled. The Senate's serious shortcomings in the conduct of this war had been exposed by two tribunes.

In 109 the Senate finally gave command to a competent general, Quintus Caecilius Metellus, who took Gaius Marius with him as one of his legates. Marius, a *novus homo* from Arpinum, was an exceptional soldier who had attracted the patronage of the Metelli. They had supported his military career and had helped him become praetor in 115, a great achievement for a *novus homo*. In 111 Marius married Julia, the aunt of Julius Caesar; he had brought his money and *popularis* politics to the marriage and she had brought her noble pedigree and the social acceptability Marius craved. The campaign in Numidia proved difficult, as Jugurtha knew his terrain well, and Metellus was forced to wage a lengthy war of attrition. Many soldiers became discontented and wrote back to Rome praising Marius and suggesting he would make a better general than Metellus. The *equites* in Rome were desperate for the war to end, as it had severely disrupted trade, and they also threw their support behind Marius. In 108 Marius asked for permission to return to Rome to stand in the consular elections but Metellus refused: a *novus homo* as consul was a step too far for Metellus, a member of the ruling elite, to accept. He eventually, but reluctantly, released Marius, who made it to Rome just in time. He was elected consul and appointed commander in Numidia by the Assembly. The Senate had no choice but to accept.

Marius next introduced a new method of recruitment which laid the foundation of a professional Roman army composed of career soldiers. There

were fewer peasant farmers in Italy and those who remained were increasingly unwilling to leave their farms to fight in extended campaigns. Therefore Marius started to recruit an army from landless volunteers. He also improved equipment, discipline and conditions, and turned his legionaries into a highly skilled mobile fighting force, the *muli Mariani*, Marius's mules, so called because of the equipment each man carried. The Senate were infuriated by the changes and refused to take responsibility for an army of recruits with no land to return to at the end of a campaign. The soldiers, therefore, looked to Marius for rewards and land on demobilisation, which tied them to their general and not to the Senate. This was a dangerous development that would lead to the rise of military dynasts such as Marius, Sulla, Pompey and Caesar, powerful men backed by loyal armies.

Marius returned to Numidia and took three years to defeat Jugurtha. Accompanying him as quaestor was Lucius Cornelius Sulla, a very able but dissolute noble who served him with distinction and eventually accepted the surrender of Jugurtha, an action which robbed Marius of some of his glory and which Plutarch suggests was the beginning of the personal enmity between the two men. While Marius was fighting in Africa, two Germanic tribes, the Cimbri and the Teutones, started to move towards Italy. The senatorial commanders sent against them were spectacularly defeated and there was popular demand for Marius to take over. When he returned from Numidia, Marius was elected consul a second time for 104, breaking the terms of the *lex Villia Annalis*, and the German command was transferred to him. Marius was re-elected to the consulship in his absence for each of the next three years. During the lengthy campaign Sulla realized that Marius had become jealous of his ability and was blocking his career, therefore he transferred his allegiance to Catulus, a leading optimate. Sulla and Marius had become personal and political enemies whose rivalry would culminate in civil war.

After the defeat of the Cimbri and Teutones, Marius returned to Rome to stand in person at the consular election of 100 and was elected for an unprecedented sixth time. He proved to be a much less able politician than soldier, and faced intense opposition from the optimates in the Senate. Marius unwisely joined forces with an unscrupulous tribune, Saturninus, who abused his office and, when the Senate passed the SCU against him, Marius found himself in the embarrassing position of having to enforce it. Saturninus fled to the Senate House, the Curia, with his supporters, and they were killed by men on the roof who pelted them to death with the tiles. Marius retired from public life in disgrace: there were no wars to fight, the political arena did not welcome him, and he was discarded, 'like an instrument of war in time of peace' (Plutarch *Marius* 32). Marius's career had challenged the authority of the Senate in many ways. He was a *novus homo* who had held repeated consulships and such continuity of power was anathema to the Republican principle of *primus inter pares*. Marius had colluded with *populares* in the

Senate and the Assembly, and had been appointed to his commands by tribunes, not by the Senate; he had also forged strong links with his army and could count on the loyalty of a large number of veterans whom he had generously rewarded with spoils and land.

As the career of Marius declined, that of his former protégé Sulla blossomed. He was elected praetor in 97, was propraeor in Cilicia in 96 and had become the rising hope of the optimates; his noble credentials and conventional career path made him the antithesis of Marius. Both men were required, however, when the Social War broke out. In 91 a tribune, Livius Drusus, was murdered attempting to defuse the issue of allied citizenship. The *socii*, who had waited in vain for the Senate to grant them citizenship, now decided to fight for their freedom from Rome. The Romans had neglected the problem of the allies for too long and had expected too much from them. For the next three years, Rome found itself in the grip of an Italian war which could have destroyed the Republic. The Senate appointed both Sulla and Marius commanders.

Mithridates of Pontus, ruler of a large kingdom that bordered the Black Sea, decided to take advantage of Rome's serious problems within Italy and in collaboration with the neighbouring king, Tigranes of Armenia, invaded Cappadocia and Bithynia in 90. He was an ambitious ruler who was determined to expand his power, and the war escalated when Mithridates invaded Asia and ordered the massacre of 80,000 Italians. The Senate was slowly winning the Social War but, as they now had to fight to protect Rome's interests in Asia, they conceded citizenship to the *socii* to end the war in Italy quickly.

Civil war: Marius, Cinna and Sulla to 83

Sulla was elected consul in 88 and given the command against Mithridates but Marius, now seventy, coveted the position and persuaded a tribune, Sulpicius, to transfer it to him. Sulla fled to his legions outside the city but then recaptured the city and reclaimed his rightful command. Sulla's 'March on Rome' was considered sacrilegious because he had brought armed soldiers across the *pomerium*, and it made him extremely unpopular. Before Sulla left for the East he attempted to bolster the power of the optimates in his absence and introduced measures to strengthen the power of the Senate and to nip in the bud the growing powers of the tribunes and Assembly. Only one of the consuls for 87, Octavius, supported Sulla and, shortly after he left for the East, the other consul, Cinna, joined forces with Marius, who had fled to Africa but now returned to Italy. Marius called up his old veterans and together they marched on Rome and seized power. Marius had become a savage and bitter old man and he behaved with remarkable brutality to his enemies, many of whom were murdered by a band of ex-slaves, the *Bardyaei*, during the Marian terror. Marius and Cinna were elected consuls for 86 but Marius died in January, only seventeen days into his unprecedented seventh consulship. Despite the death of Marius, his *popularis* supporters, the Marians, were determined to continue his fight against the optimates and Cinna was re-elected consul for a third time in 85 with Gnaeus Carbo as his colleague.

Sulla's campaign against Mithridates was drawing to a close by 86 and the Marians hoped to prevent his successful return to Rome. They attempted to undermine him by declaring him an enemy of the Roman people and by sending out a second army with orders to defeat Mithridates and then turn on Sulla, which the soldiers refused to do. By 85 Mithridates was ready to make terms and a peace treaty was drawn up at Dardanus by which Mithridates evacuated Asia, surrendered his fleet and paid a fine to Rome but was allowed to keep his kingdom intact: lenient treatment for so formidable an enemy. Sulla did impose extremely harsh terms on the Asians, who were ordered to pay a punitive indemnity. They had welcomed Mithridates as a liberator from unpopular Roman rule and it was the price of their disloyalty.

Sulla made peace swiftly but inconclusively because he wanted to return to Italy as quickly as possible to champion the optimate cause and defeat his enemies who had worked against him in his absence and had undermined his Eastern campaign. His eyes were firmly set on Italy and the fight to wrest control from the Marians.

Note

- 1 We have, however, included in Chapter 8 a fairly detailed account of Crassus' campaign in Parthia in 53. This is, first, because of the critical importance of Crassus' death to the breakdown of the relationship between Caesar and Pompey and therefore to the immediate causes of the civil war and, second, because we have found no book at this level that deals with the campaign, whilst there are many books that give accounts of Pompey in the East and Caesar in Gaul.

SULLA AND POMPEY, 82–79

Armies at the gates of Rome

Any study of Sulla's regime is limited by the paucity of contemporary sources, although later writers such as Plutarch had access to material that has been lost, such as Sulla's own memoirs. Many later sources are hostile to Sulla and must be used with caution.

When Sulla returned to Italy in spring 83 an SCU had been passed against him. Civil war was his only option, as there was no chance of a negotiated settlement. The March on Rome in 88 was deeply embedded into the collective memory and Sulla was generally perceived as a brutal and vengeful man who must be resisted. Many flocked to join the opposition forces assembled by the consuls Scipio and Norbanus which were massing in Campania to block his advance on Rome. Sulla and five loyal and experienced legions had crossed in two groups from Dyrrachium and landed at Brundisium and Tarentum. Sulla's soldiers had taken an oath to stand by their general, even offering their own money to assist the military effort. Their exemplary conduct as they marched along the Via Appia, under orders to leave all inhabitants and their possessions untouched, was unexpected. This provoked rumours that Sulla had returned to restore peace, not make war, a possibility which attracted leading optimates such as the well-respected proconsul Metellus Pius, son of Marius' commander in Numidia. Many senators began to throw their support behind the man who claimed to defend their political interests, and the numbers joining Sulla's forces increased every day. One important recruit was Marcus Licinius Crassus, who had fled to Spain to escape the Marian terror during which both his father and brother had died. He had raised his own force and had briefly joined up with Metellus Pius but, after a quarrel, continued alone to join Sulla by way of Africa. He was entrusted with the task of recruiting among the Marsi and, according to Plutarch (*Crassus* 6), 'raised a considerable force, and showed himself an eager partisan of Sulla in his struggles'. Crassus was immediately overshadowed by the twenty-three-year-old Pompey, who arrived at Sulla's camp with a private army of three legions. He had raised them from his clients and had successfully defeated three enemy generals *en route*. Sulla was impressed.

The forces of Sulla moved north towards Capua during the summer of 83 and the consuls divided their armies the better to resist the advance. Having failed to negotiate with the slippery Norbanus, Sulla defeated his army, which then retreated to Capua. Scipio was prepared to make terms, as were others in the Senate who hoped to avoid further bloodshed. He reached an agreement with Sulla but it was never implemented because Quintus Sertorius, Scipio's envoy to Norbanus, a bitter enemy of Sulla, who had always opposed the talks, reopened hostilities. Sulla's image as a man of peace was enhanced by this episode, as he had appeared willing to end the war but had been

undermined. The episode further demoralised Scipio's army, which now changed sides, and Sulla let Scipio go. This act of clemency further suggested he could be trusted and would deal fairly with his opponents, but Carbo was not deceived. He remarked that Sulla had both a fox and a lion in his heart and 'he was more annoyed by the fox' (Plutarch, *Sulla* 28).

The new consuls of 82 were Carbo, now in his third term, and Marius' twenty-six-year-old son. Both sides spent the winter recruiting forces and Sertorius, very critical of Marian efforts so far in the war, returned to Spain, his *propraetorian* province. Sulla occupied himself in negotiations with representatives of the newly enfranchised Italian citizens, promising to honour the arrangements made, particularly about their distribution among the tribes, although it would appear that the Samnites, major opponents of Sulla during the Social War, were excluded from these talks. Possibly he held a grudge against them but it is equally likely he did not recognise the legality of their citizenship which Marius and Cinna had granted in 87. Sulla appreciated the importance of winning over those Italian communities which had not yet declared for either side and this policy further swelled his support. Although there was no further fighting within Italy during the harsh winter of 83–2, the Marians faced serious problems elsewhere when the Marian commander in Africa, Hadrianus, was killed and Balbus lost Sardinia to Sulla.

Carbo had positioned himself in Ariminum, guarding the entrance to Cisalpine Gaul, and Metellus headed towards him in the spring while Sulla tackled the young Marius, who recklessly attacked Sacriportus and was forced to retreat to Praeneste, making it into the city himself only by the skin of his teeth and the strength of his men who hauled him up and over the walls clinging to a rope. Sulla put to death all the Samnite prisoners, according to Appian (1.87), because 'they had all along been ill affected toward the Romans', a clear statement that Sulla considered they were not true Roman citizens and, therefore, not entitled to special treatment. After digging ditches and building a wall around Praeneste, Sulla handed control of the siege to Afella, but the young Marius was somehow able to send a message to Damasippus, the urban praetor, urging the Senate to execute any important Sullan sympathisers, and four men, including Quintus Scaevola, the *pontifex maximus*, were killed and their bodies thrown into the Tiber. This vengeful action terrified many of Sulla's senatorial opponents who, fearing Sulla's wrath, now fled the city. When Sulla reached Rome the gates were opened to him but he chose not to enter. He left a garrison behind and headed north to Clusium to find Carbo, already under attack from Pompey and Metellus, and a series of indecisive skirmishes followed which hit Carbo's forces particularly hard. Repeated Marian attempts to free the young Marius and his forces had failed; now, incensed by Sulla's treatment of the Samnite prisoners, a combined force of 70,000 Samnites and Lucanians set off for Praeneste in late summer. This was a serious threat and Sulla took charge of the campaign personally, blocking their route through the only pass and preventing all

Marius's attempts to break out. Norbanus had already fled to Rhodes, where he would later take his own life, and now Carbo and a group of friends fled to Africa, 'spinelessly', according to Appian (1.92), although Carbo always intended to continue resistance from the province.

The desperate Marians, deprived of their most experienced generals, attempted to divert the Sullan forces by marching on Rome and, led by the Samnite leader Telesinus, reached a position close to the Colline Gate on 1 November. They made no attempt to take the city but waited as Sulla and his forces rapidly approached. Despite the exhaustion of many of his men, and against the advice of his officers, Sulla began to fight in the late afternoon. Crassus and the right flank did well but Sulla's own forces on the left did not hold their position. Sulla himself was recognised and barely escaped with his life. He was forced to return to camp. Although news that Sulla had been killed reached Praeneste, Afella refused to believe it and continued the siege. The battle resumed during the evening and continued well into the night; it ended when the Sullans took the Samnite camp and found Telesinus and the other leaders among the dead.

Crassus excelled during the battle of the Colline Gate. He chased away and then defeated a large Marian force at Antemnae and Sulla hurried to join him at dawn on 2 November as soon as the situation around Rome itself was stable. Three thousand of the rebels within Antemnae asked to make terms and Sulla offered them safe passage if they would kill any of his opponents still inside. When this was duly done, however, the rebels were rounded up with other prisoners taken at the Colline Gate and brought to the Villa Publica in Rome, the building usually used to receive foreign ambassadors. Sulla had returned to the city and summoned the Senate to meet in the nearby Temple of Bellona. He then gave the order to massacre the 6,000 prisoners and began the terror with which his name is associated. Plutarch (*Sulla* 30) writes that 'the shrieks of such a multitude, who were being massacred in a narrow space, filled the air and the senators were dumbfounded'. Sulla continued to address the Senate with apparent disregard.

The image of the man of peace fighting for a peaceful Rome was overturned and the tone of Sulla's new regime was set. After his speech, Sulla set off for Praeneste, bearing the severed heads of many Marians who had fallen at the Colline Gate. The message was clear: further resistance was pointless. The city quickly surrendered, although the young Marius evaded capture and probably killed himself after attempting unsuccessfully to flee through the town's drainage system. Sulla received his head from Afella. There is some disagreement in the sources but it is likely Sulla then divided the captives into three groups and pardoned the Romans but killed the Samnites and those from Praeneste who had supported Marius. Sulla's men, taking their cue from their commander, now saw all opponents of their general as legitimate targets, to be hunted down within the city and throughout the Italian peninsula. The ensuing violence was unco-ordinated

and savage, and motivated as much by profit and sadistic pleasure as by a genuine desire to take revenge on Sulla's enemies. There were dark days ahead.

The king of the knights

It took Sulla two more years to subdue the handful of towns within Italy which still resisted him, but a more serious threat to his regime was the continued resistance of Marians in Spain, Sicily and Africa. Sulla entrusted their defeat to Pompey, the twenty-three-year-old who had so impressed him. Gnaeus Pompeius (Pompey) was born in 106, son of Gnaeus Pompeius Strabo, consul in 89, who had fought in the Social War. The wealthy Pompey family owned land and property in Picenum but Strabo was keen to pursue a successful political career and increase the number of his clients, which he did successfully in Spain and Transalpine Gaul. Sulla had always been wary of Strabo, and when Cinna and Marius marched on Rome in 87 Sulla recognised that Strabo was playing a double game, apparently helping Octavius but also negotiating with Cinna, according to Velleius (2.21), 'acting in his own interest and watching his chance'. Strabo's death from plague in 87 brought this dangerous policy to an end. He was an excellent soldier but Strabo had also been hated, and his body was desecrated at his funeral.

Strabo's son was charming and attractive. Plutarch (*Pompey* 2) talks of 'the majesty and kingliness of his nature', and Pompey is said to have resembled statues of Alexander the Great, which became a common nickname. Pompey had been trained by his father and clearly had inherited his excellent military instincts. He served on his father's staff during the Social War and had been party to his father's dubious loyalties. When Cinna took over Rome in 86, Pompey's house was ransacked and a case of *peculatus*, embezzlement, was brought against him. Pompey was defended by the censor, Philippus, as well as by Carbo and Quintus Hortensius, the finest orator in Rome at that time, and the case came to nothing. Despite this appearance of support, the political upheavals of recent years, coupled with his father's unpopularity and slipperiness, meant that Pompey had no obvious political allies. His connections were not strong, and his allegiances were dubious. Although he had wealth and position, Pompey needed to escape from his father's shadow and establish himself. He had seen his father fail in the game of cultivating both sides and playing one off against the other; he knew that he needed to back a winner to gain maximum political advantage. If it meant changing allegiances from time to time, the young Pompey was prepared to do it; political opportunism was second nature to him.

From his home in Picenum Pompey saw 'the best and most prominent citizens forsaking their homes and hastening to the camp of Sulla as to a haven of refuge' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 6). It was not in his nature to follow the crowd; Pompey did not want to be 'a fugitive, nor empty-handed', and he decided to join Sulla 'in a way that would gain him honour, and with an armed force' (*ibid.*). He therefore set about recruiting men in Picenum, driving off the agents sent by Carbo for the same purpose. The journey was

not without its difficulties and Pompey repulsed attacks from several forces, including those of the consul Scipio and of Carbo himself. The three legions that he presented to Sulla 'of strong young men' (*ibid.*), already battle-hardened, impressed the old general, who showed Pompey great respect, always standing and uncovering his head in his presence, a habit he continued for the rest of his life, and possibly also hailing him *imperator*. Pompey's conduct during the civil war did nothing to alter Sulla's favourable opinion and, when the fighting in Italy was virtually over, it was to Pompey that Sulla turned. In 82 he was twenty-four years old and not a senator but Pompey was given *propraetorian imperium* and orders to recover Sicily, where Carbo had joined forces with Perperna, the governor. Pompey's campaign was extremely successful and, although Perperna fled to Spain to join Sertorius, Carbo was captured. Plutarch (*Pompey* 10) and Appian (1.96) both describe how Pompey ordered Carbo, three times consul, 'to be brought before his feet in chains, and after making a public harangue at him, murdered him and sent his head to Sulla'. Carbo had defended Pompey in 86 and many interpreted Pompey's behaviour as disloyalty, but it was essential for Pompey to secure his own position with Sulla and to demonstrate that he was prepared to carry out the great man's bidding unquestioningly.

While Pompey was reorganising Sicily and missing no opportunity to gain clients and extend his influence, the Senate ordered him to Africa, where the king of Numidia, Hiarbas, was assisting the Marian forces led by Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus. Plutarch (*Pompey* 12) describes his impressive forty-day campaign during which Pompey defeated his enemies, put Ahenobarbus to death and replaced Hiarbas with Hiempsal. The victorious Pompey was hailed *imperator* by his loyal troops, but then received orders from Sulla to disband his army and return with just one legion. Sulla may have been concerned about Pompey's loyalty but, when it was clear that the young general was not prepared to return without all his legions, Sulla backed down and greeted him in person, giving him the title *Magnus the Great*, which Pompey retained for the rest of his life. The relationship between the two men was strained by this incident but it soured when Pompey demanded a Triumph. Sulla was infuriated by his arrogance and initially refused on the technicality that Pompey was not even a senator, but later agreed when faced with Pompey's assertion that 'more worshipped the rising than the setting sun' (*Pompey* 14). Sulla appeared to have given in to a brazen bully, but it is more likely he permitted the Triumph as a concession to Pompey, who now married his pregnant stepdaughter Aemilia, an arrangement which required them both to divorce their existing partners. This marriage placed the young Pompey at the heart of the optimate, for now the Sullan, political establishment, although Aemilia died shortly afterwards in childbirth.

Pompey was only twenty-five and his Triumph was the first to be awarded to an equestrian. The magnificent occasion took place on 12 March 81, although Pompey's grandiose plan to enter the city on a chariot pulled by four

elephants was scuppered when the elephants could not get through the narrow city gates. Pompey had the option of becoming a senator at this point but refused; as Plutarch (*ibid.*) wrote, ‘indeed it would have been nothing wonderful for Pompey to be a senator before he was of age for it; but it was a dazzling honour for him to celebrate a triumph before he was a senator’.

Murder and robbery

While Pompey was away destroying Marian resistance, Rome was enduring yet another period of terror. Sulla had embarked upon a process of proscription which cast a dark shadow over his victory. The massacre of the prisoners in the Villa Publica 'gave even the dullest Roman to understand that, in the matter of tyranny, there had been an exchange, but not a deliverance' (Plutarch, *Sulla* 30). Sulla's experiences had made him unforgiving and unbending. His political and personal enemies had worked unceasingly to undermine his long and arduous campaign in the East, and he had been forced to fight his way into Rome; his reserves of mercy, if they had ever existed, were severely depleted. It was time to deal with his enemies, and 'Sulla now busied himself with slaughter' (*Sulla* 31).

Sulla had made it clear during his first appearance in Rome that all those who had continued to resist him after the collapse of Scipio's terms could expect to die. Political enemies were killed and their property seized, but so also were men whom Sulla disliked and others his adherents disliked; the proscriptions appeared arbitrary and limitless. Plutarch records how a brave young senator, Gaius Caecilius Metellus, asked Sulla to end the uncertainty. The reply he received was practical. Lists appeared on white tablets in the Forum three days running with eighty, then 220, then another 220 names on them. The message was clear. The lists would continue until every man Sulla had marked for punishment was dead. The lists were published in Rome and also in the Italian towns, and it was illegal to protect anyone named. The reward for killing a proscribed man was the enormous sum of two talents, even payable to a slave who killed his master. Proof of death was required to claim payment; this usually came in the form a severed head. Sulla had many of these trophies in his own house, and displayed the head of the young Marius in the Forum. The property of the proscribed was confiscated, becoming 'enemy spoil which would return to the victor, Sulla' (Keaveney 2005: 131), and the sons and grandsons of the proscribed were forbidden to hold further public office.

The proscriptions began as a political and personal purge but quickly developed into a means of acquiring wealth for Sulla and his supporters. He often gave away land and property as gifts to his political and theatrical friends, many of whom also benefited from the knock-down prices achieved at the rigged auctions. The lists were frequently amended by those with their own agenda, and many were conveniently killed in cases of mistaken identity. Plutarch (*Sulla* 31) records the fate of Quintus Aurelius, a wealthy man with no particular political affiliations who found his own name on a list, and commented, 'I am being hunted down for my Alban estate'. Twenty times more *equites* than senators were killed, and those who had benefited during the rule of Cinna were specifically targeted, probably about 2,000 in total.

One of the major beneficiaries was Crassus, who, unlike Pompey, had remained in Rome. Crassus participated enthusiastically in the proscriptions, buying up property at bargain prices and, although many of Sulla's supporters were playing a similar game, Crassus was particularly good at it. Plutarch judged him 'most avaricious' (*Crassus* 6), and Sulla was greatly angered when he discovered that Crassus had added the name of a man from Bruttium to the lists simply to obtain his property. He never trusted him with high office again. Another who profited from the proscriptions was an impoverished young noble, Lucius Sergius Catilina, known as Catiline who, if later accounts are to be believed, behaved with remarkable brutality. A praetor, Gratidianus, nephew of Marius, was proscribed and fell into the hands of Quintus Lutatius Catulus. He had allegedly been involved in the forced suicide of Catulus's father during the Marian terror, and Catulus handed him over to Catiline, whose sister was Gratidianus's wife. It was later claimed that Catiline beat the victim all the way to the Catulus family tomb, battered his arms and legs to a pulp, sliced off his ears and removed his eyes and tongue; his head, allegedly still alive and breathing according to Cicero, was then presented to Sulla.

Gaius Julius Caesar, a young man at the heart of the Marian political establishment, was fortunate to avoid proscription. His aunt Julia was Marius's widow and the mother of young Marius, and Caesar was married to Cornelia, Cinna's daughter. When Caesar defied Sulla's demand that he divorce his wife, the dictator confiscated her dowry and prevented Caesar becoming *flamen Dialis*, a priesthood he had been awarded by Cinna and Marius. Caesar's continued resistance soon found him on the proscription lists and he fled Rome. Sleeping rough and pursued by bounty hunters, Caesar contracted malaria and faced hardships and dangers until his mother, Aurelia, appealed to the Vestal Virgins and to her cousins, Gaius Aurelius Cotta and Mamercus Aemilius Lepidus, two leading Sullans, whose joint entreaties secured a pardon. Many felt that Caesar at less than twenty years old was far too young to pose any danger but it is said that Sulla did not agree, apparently commenting that 'they had no sense if they did not see in this boy many Mariuses' (Plutarch, *Caesar* 1).

The period of Sulla's life after the battle of the Colline Gate was marked by a level of brutality that could not have been predicted; he even ordered the remains of Marius to be removed from his tomb and scattered. Any acts of cruelty in his earlier career had been in pursuit of military glory or self-preservation, and ancient writers struggled to explain the scale and nature of the proscriptions which earned Sulla a dark reputation among succeeding generations. Both Plutarch (*Sulla* 30) and Dio (33.109) believed a man's character was fixed at birth, and sought to detect latent cruelty within Sulla's personality, initially controlled but eventually unleashed. Plutarch also speculated on the nature of power as a corrupting force, suggesting that its acquisition eventually led Sulla to such extreme behaviour. Some modern historians have looked to the injustices of 88 when Sulla was forced to fight to

regain his rightful command and then to the hardships of his campaign in which was continually undermined by his enemies, and have suggested these experiences reinforced a naturally vengeful nature. It is clear that Sulla saw his political enemies as the enemies of Rome itself and was determined to treat them with the savagery he felt appropriate to their crimes. Sulla's attempts at conciliation during the civil war were commendable, and his enemies' rejection of his efforts was the ultimate betrayal. Unfortunately the brutality involved, the arbitrary nature of many of the proscriptions, and the degree to which Sulla's supporters profited from the misfortunes of others, must qualify any justification he may have had in taking revenge. These deaths horrified his contemporaries and remain 'a blot on a character and a career so admirable in many other ways' (Keaveney 2005: 134).

Dictatorship and reform

When Sulla first entered Rome he operated with the *imperium* of a proconsul but, after the deaths of the two consuls of 82, the Senate appointed an *interrex*, who would normally organise the election of replacement consuls, *consules suffecti*. They chose Lucius Valerius Flaccus, the *princeps senatus*, who had been consul in 100 and was one of those senators who had attempted to conciliate Sulla during the war. Sulla had written to Flaccus and had argued that the temporary rule of a dictator was required to undo the damage of the recent political conflicts as quickly as possible. Therefore Flaccus introduced the *lex Valeria* into the *comitia centuriata*, and Sulla was elected *dictator legibus scribundis et reipublicae constituendae*, dictator charged with the responsibility of writing laws and bringing order to the Republic, the use of the verbs indicating that the office had a specific purpose.

Sulla's power as dictator was unchecked: there was no balancing colleague, no veto could be used against him and advance agreement was given to all his future measures, which did not need to be submitted to the people for approval. He could also pass the death sentence on any Roman citizen without a trial, a power used extensively during the proscriptions. The dictatorship had last been used during the wars against Carthage in the early second century and the rules, which actually related to the appointment of a dictator by the consuls, not by an *interrex*, limited it to six months' tenure. Sulla's appointment had no time limit, implying that any decision to end it lay with Sulla himself. Flaccus became Sulla's Master of the Horse, thus directly linking the office of dictator to both *princeps senatus* and Senate, and all Sulla's reforms were in the form of Senate decrees and were not submitted to the people for approval.

Appian (1.98–100) was very critical of these political arrangements. As a dictator, Sulla was to be accompanied by twenty-four lictors, but Appian commented that this was 'the same number as were borne before the ancient kings', and concluded that 'Sulla became king, or tyrant, *de facto*, not elected, but holding power by force and violence'. Elections proceeded as normal, despite Sulla's dictatorship, and Marcus Tullius and Cornelius Dolabella became consuls in 81, while Sulla himself shared the consulship with Metellus Pius in 80. Appian argued that these political arrangements were a cloak for the reality of a power assumed by Sulla tantamount to *regnum*; 'by way of keeping up the form of the republic he allowed them to appoint consuls ... but Sulla, like a reigning sovereign, was dictator over the consuls'. Those who held consulships during his regime may have had little power, but the appearance of normal Republican government did remain. While much has been made of the unconventional nature of Sulla's power, attention must be drawn to the fact that he laid down the dictatorship in 81 or at the beginning of 80. Once he had achieved his aims Sulla dispensed with the

emergency office, an action that must be seen as far from monarchical. Keaveney sums up his approach to power:

For him the clause which allowed him to hold power for as long as was necessary to remedy the situation was no vague formula to be abused at will or manipulated to give an indefinite period of domination, but rather a literal injunction to be strictly obeyed ... Like previous dictators Sulla had been appointed to end a crisis, and when he had done that he resigned his office.

(Keaveney 2005: 139)

The Sullan Constitution was a programme to restore and revive the power and authority of the Senate. The Gracchi brothers had unconventionally, but not illegally, exercised, and therefore enhanced, the powers of the tri-bunate and Plebeian Assembly to pass important legislation without input from the Senate, and had also trespassed into the senatorial preserves of finance and foreign policy. Some subsequent tribunes had used their powers for good, such as Memmius in 111 and Mamilius in 109, who had challenged the Senate's control of military appointments when they appeared incapable of finding anyone of sufficient calibre to defeat Jugurtha, and Drusus, who attempted to use his tribunician power to resolve the explosive issue of the *socii* in 91 and died in the attempt. Other tribunes such as Saturninus in 100 and Sulpicius in 88 had, in the view of the optimates, used the office unscrupulously to enhance their own position.

Tribunes could be loose cannons because of their power of veto, and it took only one to cause trouble, so Sulla decided to tackle the office itself. The tribune's right to introduce legislation was removed, thus passing it back to the Senate, where it had firmly lain before the Gracchi. The power of the tribunician veto was limited and its use restricted to matters in which an individual's rights were affected; tribunes also lost their right to summon the Senate and their judicial powers were removed. Then Sulla produced a masterstroke. No man who had been a tribune was allowed to progress to further office. Although the tribunate was not on the *cursus honorum*, the role had been increasingly seen by many aspiring politicians as a means to gain popularity and as a step towards a successful political career. This measure effectively rendered the office impotent. Velleius (2.30) concluded that 'Sulla left the tribunician power a shadow without a substance', and Appian (1.100) wrote that 'all men of reputation or family, who formerly contended for this office, shunned it thereafter'. Sulla also abolished the corn doles upon which so many poorer citizens and supporters of the troublesome tribunes depended but which were also a significant drain on the Treasury.

Running parallel with the growing powers of the tribunes and the enhanced role of the Assembly had been a decline in the importance, size and influence

of the Senate. Deaths, wars and proscriptions on both sides had reduced its size by at least half and it was now a body of about 150 which looked weak. Sulla aimed to restore it to its position as the preeminent organ of power within Republican government by increasing its size, reclaiming the powers and spheres of influence that had been taken from it, and restricting the tribunate and Assembly. Sulla doubled its original size to 600. He appointed many men who had served him well in his military campaigns as senators and then recruited 300 *equites*, many of whom were the younger sons of nobles or from the most important families in the newly enfranchised Italian towns. Sulla's new Senate was overwhelmingly loyal to him and contained an optimate majority until the last days of the Republic. Sulla increased the number of quaestors from eight to twenty and they now automatically entered the Senate after their year of office; previously they would have had to wait until the next census. This measure was a way to maintain numbers in the Senate but possibly also limit the influence of the censors, who had previously been the key influence in the recruitment of new senators but it would also contribute to much more intense competition for office. It ensured a flow of young blood into the Senate and established a closer link between the voters and the senators. Sulla enrolled into the citizen body 10,000 Cornelii, many of whom were freed slaves of the proscribed and loyal to Sulla himself, possibly to exert some pro-Sullan 'influence' during elections, although nothing is heard of them in subsequent years.

The career of Marius with its seven consulships, including five in succession, and the flouting of the rules of the *cursus honorum* in recent years by others such as Cinna, informed Sulla's next reform. The Senate collectively needed to be more powerful than any of its individual members. Limiting the period and frequency of office was the old way in which this had been done and Sulla looked back to those rules. The *cursus honorum* had been enshrined in the *lex Villia Annalis* of 180, which was redrafted by Sulla as the *lex Cornelia Annalis*. At the heart of his plans to reconstruct the collective power of a strengthened Senate was a set of clearly defined rules to restore the principle of *primus inter pares* upon which the Republic had been built. The minimum age limits for office were raised: thirty for a quaestor, thirty-six for an aedile, thirty-nine for a praetor, forty-two for a consul; there were to be men of experience in the magistracies. The rules of a two-year gap between successive magistracies and a ten-year gap between repeating the same office were rigidly enforced. When Afella, who had led the Sullan forces at Praeneste, attempted to stand as consul for 80 even though he had not even held the office of quaestor and persisted against Sulla's wishes, the dictator arranged his death.

Sulla's own career had demonstrated in a textbook manner the danger that could be posed to Rome by any one of its promagistrates in possession of an army. The Senate's failure to establish a system of pensions for soldiers after the introduction of voluntary recruitment by Marius had forged a powerful

link between general and veteran. The soldiers looked to their commander for plunder during campaigns and land when they were demobilised; they did not look to the Senate. Sulla now fully reinstated the Senate's power to make promagisterial appointments; increasingly the Assembly had trespassed into this area, as Sulla's own experiences with Sulpicius and the Mithridatic command had highlighted. The *lex Cornelia de maiestate*, a treason law, was introduced to regulate the behaviour of governors within provinces, who were not allowed to make war on their own initiative or take forces outside their province, thus curtailing their freedom of action and reasserting the power of the Senate in such decisions. Any governor who did not leave his province within thirty days of his replacement's arrival was guilty of treason; no man could achieve continuity of power if the Senate regularly reviewed and replaced governors. Rome now had ten provinces. Sulla increased the number of praetors from six to eight to provide sufficient promagistrates as annual replacements and also introduced the use of *privati cum imperio*, non-magistrates with *imperium*, who could replace governors if no promagisterial candidate was available immediately. This ensured that there were plenty of possible replacements and prevented any unhelpful prolongation of office. It also obviated the need, which could arise in an emergency, to bring a province into the sphere of another governor, thus enhancing his power.

The Roman court system had developed piecemeal and urgently needed reform. Sulla established seven *quaestiones*, courts, each presided over by a praetor. One court dealt with *ambitus*, political bribery, a second with *peculatus*, embezzlement of state funds, a third dealt with forgery and counterfeiting, a fourth tackled crimes of violence such as murder, arson and robbery and a fifth dealt with *iniuria*, personal injury. A treason court was in existence, but Sulla's clearer definition of promagisterial treason, *maiestas*, in the *lex Cornelia de maiestate* established much clearer and firmer guidelines for this court to follow. Gaius Gracchus had already pulled together previous measures concerning *repetundae*, the recovery of goods and money extorted from the provinces, and a permanent court already existed in which provincials could make claims against governors and their staff. Provincials had the power to bring cases in their own right and, if successful, could reclaim double the value of the goods; Sulla increased this to two-and-a-half times. Since the time of Gaius Gracchus the juries had been composed of equites. Sulla replaced the equestrian jurors with senators in all the *quaestiones*, another reassertion of the senatorial order's pre-eminence in public life.

Sulla took traditional religion very seriously and shared the view that the turbulence of recent years had resulted from a lapse of religious observance in both private and public life, thus incurring the displeasure of the gods. He now endeavoured to re-establish the *pax deorum*, and he restored buildings such as the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitol, gave a tenth of his fortune to Hercules in gratitude for his many victories, and reorganised the major

priestly colleges, including the augurs, whose number was increased to fifteen. In an attempt to restore the *mos maiorum* and curb the excesses that had undermined Rome's traditional values, sumptuary laws were passed which aimed to restore more acceptable levels of spending on luxury items and ceremonies such as feasts and funerals. Sulla has been labelled hypocritical for his own failure to adhere to these laws when he spent lavishly on the funeral of his wife Metella, whom he divorced after she became ill. As a recently appointed augur Sulla was forbidden to see her or allow her to die in his home, and the unfortunate woman was removed elsewhere. Guilt rather than hypocrisy may explain the generosity of her funeral expenses, particularly as Plutarch alleged that Sulla 'tried to assuage his sorrow by drinking parties and convivial banquets' (*Sulla* 35).

Sulla spent much time on the settlement of his veterans. He had returned to Italy with twenty-three legions of loyal soldiers who expected fair treatment from their commander. Land had been seized during the proscriptions, and yet more was forfeited by communities which had supported the wrong side in the civil war. As the land was largely concentrated in Umbria, Etruria and Campania, these areas were the most obvious to settle with veterans. It seems likely that the size of a holding was determined by rank and length of service. Individual veterans met with mixed success. Although some prospered, others received plots unsuitable for settlement or they lacked the skills to make a success of farming. Sallust (12) later argued that many had acquired a love of luxury during Sulla's Eastern campaigns which had 'enervated their warlike spirit' and had left them idle and unwilling to put in the work required. Many veterans certainly flocked to the military campaigns of the 70s and others would join the army of Catiline established in Etruria, a largely Sullan area.

The exact date when Sulla laid down the dictatorship is not known. He announced his candidacy for the consular elections of 80 and may have resigned when he was elected during July or August 81, but could have retained the dictatorship until taking office as consul in January 80. Whenever it occurred, Sulla followed the tradition of previous dictators and announced his resignation personally to the people in the Forum, immediately dismissed his lictors and bodyguard, and walked home accompanied by a few friends.

Did Sulla know his political ABC?

Sulla's rule, first as dictator and then as consul, was marked by many celebrations. In January 81 Sulla triumphed over Mithridates and in November 81 the Ludi Victoriae Sullae were held in Sulla's honour and celebrated on the anniversary of the battle of the Colline Gate. These new games coincided with the Olympic Games, which were ruined because the majority of the athletes chose to come to Rome to compete for the generous prizes on offer rather than go to Greece. Pompey triumphed in 80, and the games organised by the aediles included the first fight between bulls and elephants that Rome had seen. Plutarch (*Sulla* 35) writes that Sulla met his last wife, Valeria, at these games. She was the sister of Hortensius the orator, recently divorced and very attractive. Plutarch dismisses the relationship, claiming that it was merely 'the most disgraceful and shameless passions', adding that Sulla kept her at home but preferred to spend his time with ballet dancers and harpists, and people from the theatre, particularly Roscius the comedian and Metrobius the female impersonator, an old flame from his youth 'of whom, though past his prime, he continued up to the last to be passionately fond, and made no denial of it' (*Sulla* 36).

Sulla was elected consul again for 79 but did not take office. He left Rome and retired to one of his opulent villas, surrounded by friends, allegedly 'drinking with them on couches all day long' (*ibid.*). As Sulla wrote his Memoirs during this time this cannot be entirely true. Of the twenty-two Latin books Sulla produced during retirement mere fragments of three remain, but it is clear from these, and the references to the full Memoirs by later writers such as Plutarch, that Sulla attributed his success to close collaboration with the gods, who had blessed him with *felicitas*, good fortune. It seems likely, as Keaveney argues (2005: 168–9) that the Memoirs were written as a political pamphlet designed to lend weight to Sulla's reforms and help his supporters in the Senate to uphold his work. Sulla remained at a distance from Rome during his retirement but returned to canvass when a strong Sullan candidate for the consulship, Quintus Lutatius Catulus, was challenged in the election of 78 by Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, who planned, if elected, to dismantle Sulla's legislative programme. Pompey backed Lepidus, 'making the people zealously support him through their goodwill towards himself' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 15). Seager argues this was an action of supreme self-interest; Pompey backed him in the hope that 'an unsettled situation of any kind was likely, in some way, to further his own rise' (2002: 30). Sulla was far from impressed by this opportunist behaviour and cornered Pompey as he left the Forum, accusing him of political naivety: 'it was a generous and noble thing for Lepidus, the worst of men, to be proclaimed consul by a larger vote than Catulus, the best of men, because you influenced the people to take this course' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 15). Both men were elected consul, but Sulla was

unable to forgive such overt opposition and omitted Pompey from his will.

Plutarch (*Sulla* 36) records the circumstances of Sulla's death in early 78 in pathological detail, describing ulcers in the intestines and flesh 'converted into worms'. It seems likely that Sulla suffered from scabies, a skin complaint caused by a mite that burrows into the skin and causes angry lesions. His legendary love of excess must have done great harm to his liver, and the final haemorrhage described by Plutarch would be consistent with liver failure. Pompey and Catulus took the lead in arguing for a public cremation when Lepidus insisted it was not necessary. Pompey hid his disappointment about his exclusion from the will with dignity and 'gave to the interment honour and security' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 15). Sulla's funeral procession was a magnificent spectacle. Preceded by his *fascēs* and standards, his body was borne on a golden carriage followed by innumerable veterans and 210 open litters bearing coins and valuable spices to symbolise his wealth and power. The Senate and other ranks followed the procession and the body was laid on a pyre erected in the Forum. It is likely that Hortensius delivered the eulogy under a threatening sky, and the cremation was delayed until the afternoon when the weather had improved. Plutarch (*Sulla* 38) describes a strong wind arising which caused the fire to burn strongly and impressively until eventually stanchied by a shower of rain; 'Therefore his good fortune would seem to have lasted to the very end, and taken part in his funeral rites.'

Sulla has been seen as a reactionary and tyrannical politician who unsuccessfully attempted to turn the clock back and restore the pre-Gracchan Republic, and chose to do so as a dictator, itself an aberration of the system he claimed to be restoring. This view largely misinterprets and exaggerates the impact of the challenges the Senate had faced between the tribunes of the Gracchi and Sulla's dictatorship. The founders of the Republic had believed the Senate should always have a collective authority that outweighed the influence of any individual within it, and that its place within the constitution should always be supreme. The Gracchi had undermined the Senate by enhancing the role of tribunes and thereby demonstrating the potential power of the Assembly, and the career of Marius had challenged the principle of *primus inter pares*, but the Republican system had largely prevailed intact. These men, and other tribunes such as Saturninus and Sulpicius, had been the exception rather than the rule. The Senate had proved flawed but far from beaten and had given no indication that it was anywhere other than in its rightful place. The Senate had shrunk in size, so Sulla increased its numbers and restored and restated its full powers to make them clear and unchallengeable and he tackled those who had undermined it, such as the tribunes and repeat office holders, so that they could not do so again. His own career, and that of Marius, had shown Sulla the danger of a general with a loyal army. He reformed the system of promagistrates by binding them more closely to the Senate but failed to break the links between armies and their commanders; this problem would remain and escalate.

The Senate had faced many challenges in the previous fifty years which had caused 'its authority to weaken and its prestige to dim' (Keaveney 2005: 150). Sulla believed the Senate was more than capable of political survival, and his reforms were intended to enable it to resume its commanding position in the Republic. Caesar would later allege that Sulla misjudged the political situation and did not know his political ABC, but this verdict places full responsibility for the success or failure of his reforms upon Sulla's own shoulders. He had given his Senate the tools they needed, but it was up to them to use them effectively.

***Cui bono?* The emergence of Marcus Tullius Cicero**

Marcus Tullius Cicero was twenty-six when he took part in his first major trial in 80, just after the proscriptions had finished, and he went on to become one of Rome's finest lawyers, statesmen and orators whose speeches, writings and letters have given scholars a unique insight into this period. The *Pro Roscio* is his speech in defence of Sextus Roscius, who claimed that he had been unjustly accused of killing his father. Those who had made the accusation were close to Sulla himself and had profited from the recent instability. The heart of Cicero's defence was the question 'Cui bono?' Who benefited if his client was found guilty? The published speech would suggest that Cicero exposed the guilt of one of Sulla's closest associates and publicly challenged the proscriptions. There are few extant contemporary sources from these years and it is unusual to find anything critical, but it is not clear whether this speech was published immediately after the trial or whether it was significantly altered by Cicero later to include references to, and implied criticism of, Sulla's regime which could have been perilous to include at the time.

Cicero was born in 106 in Arpinum, a small town in the Volscian hills seventy miles south-east of Rome and, coincidentally, also the birthplace of the great general Marius. The town had become a *municipium* and its inhabitants were granted full Roman citizenship in 188. Like the great general Cicero was a *novus homo*, born into a family with wealth and local importance but no experience at the heart of Roman politics and no ancestor of magisterial status. The cognomen Cicero translates as 'chickpea', *cicer*, either because of a cleft in the chin or nose of some ancestor or because the family had successfully cultivated the pulse at some point but, despite his name's satirical possibilities, Cicero strongly resisted pressure to change it. The Cicero family had a house in Rome, situated in an unfashionable area on the Esquiline Hill, and it was here, as well as in their villa in Arpinum, that Marcus and his younger brother Quintus were educated in the Greek style, studying philosophy, rhetoric and literature. It was clear from an early age that Marcus was a child prodigy, and his equestrian father had great hopes that such a son would excel in the legal profession. Plutarch (*Cicero* 2) records that the fathers of fellow pupils 'used to visit the schools in order to see Cicero with their own eyes and observe the quickness and intelligence in his studies for which he was extolled'.

Cicero's family was well connected, despite their own lack of political importance, and 'some of the more formidable barriers to his political advancement had already been surmounted by his family's *amicitia* with several of Rome's most distinguished political families' (Mitchell 1979: 3). This was patronage at work. Cicero's father had connections with Scaurus, the *princeps senatus*, who had known his own father, and used the relationship to

obtain access to this important household. Cicero's great-aunt, his paternal grandfather's sister, had been married to Marcus Gratidius, a protégé of the statesman Marcus Antonius, which provided links with another important political family. Marius' brother had adopted another member of Gratidius' family, Gratidianus, who had been praetor in 85 and 84 and was killed by Catiline during the proscriptions, which had drawn the two Arpinum families even closer together. Lucius Licinius Crassus was an even more important contact, as he was a celebrated orator and statesman, and Cicero's aunt provided a link here through her husband. Cicero modelled his own career on that of Crassus, consul in 95,¹ whom he greatly admired and frequently mentioned and commended in his speeches and writings, considering him to be the epitome of Roman statesmanship (*Pro Sestio* 137–9).

These lines of patronage were fully utilised by their father to enable Marcus and Quintus to enter important political houses in Rome. They listened to the conversations and studied with those present. The boys became pupils of Crassus' father-in-law, Scaevola, a venerable senator now well into his eighties, who was an augur and one of Rome's finest jurists. The brothers also met his nephew of the same name who was *pontifex maximus* and had an unrivalled reputation for honesty in public life. Both men were related by marriage to Marius but also had long-established family links with Arpinum and its people and had acted as its patrons on many occasions. Their defence of optimate politics was far removed from the standpoint of Marius, whose career had frequently challenged their most dearly held beliefs. Although Cicero did not share Marius' political views, he saw him as a precursor, a man of municipal origin who had achieved the highest office in Rome. The Cicero brothers rubbed shoulders with other gifted young Romans who were exploiting their links and contacts as well, and among these were Gaius Julius Caesar, nephew by marriage of Marius, and Titus Pomponius, also of equestrian rank and later known as Atticus, who became the recipient of many of Cicero's letters. All his teachers, mentors and patrons influenced the young Cicero in his political beliefs. He was largely exposed to the conservatives of Rome, committed to the preservation of their power and status and to the continuation of the system which would guarantee their social and political pre-eminence. Although Cicero liked to attribute his political success to his own qualities of *virtus*, virtue, and *industria*, hard work, connections with such families opened many doors that would have remained closed to other *novi homines* and went some way to assuage the normal snobbery of the ruling elite towards an able and ambitious young man from outside the city.

In his later writings Cicero acknowledged the influence of three Greek scholars: Philo, a philosopher, Archias, a poet from Antioch, whom he defended in 62, and Molon of Rhodes, an advocate in the law courts, who gave him a broad liberal education and steered his formidable intellect towards civil law. There was no systematic course to be followed by those who wished to take up a legal career and, as well as studying individual cases,

Cicero frequented the courts to understand how the system worked, listening, absorbing and practising his oratory and rhetoric. Cicero was greatly affected by the murder of Scaevola by the Marians in 82, as he had supported Cicero in his legal studies, but Cicero continued to attend the Forum and closely observed the leading politicians and lawyers at trials and *contiones*, public meetings. He also worked on his rhetorical skills, daily practising declamation, the delivery of speeches composed upon particular topics. Although he served briefly on the general staff of Pompey's father Strabo during the Social War alongside Pompey and Catiline, and later with Sulla during his campaign in the south against the Samnites, Cicero hated war and eschewed violence throughout his career. He successfully remained aloof from the political upheavals of the 80s, concentrated on his studies and literary pursuits, and did not push himself forward in the courts like many of his eager contemporaries. Cicero gives details of this period of his life in the *Brutus*, a dialogue and historical account of Roman rhetoric (304–12).

Mastery of rhetoric was considered essential for any lawyer in Rome, and Cicero's skills were tested in his first criminal case in 80 which was also the first murder trial since the Sullan proscriptions had begun. It fell into the lap of the aspiring young lawyer because no one else could be found who was prepared to take on a matter of such delicacy. Cicero was engaged to defend Sextus Roscius, the son of a landowner of the same name from Ameria, a hill town to the north of the city. The elder Roscius had been murdered in the red light district of Rome and his son was charged with parricide, one of the most serious crimes and subject to the death penalty. The method of execution was specific and brutal. The convicted murderer was to be beaten until bloody and sewn into a sack with a dog, a cockerel, a snake and a monkey, which was then thrown into the River Tiber. Cicero's defence speech survives but those of the prosecutors do not, which limits our understanding of exactly what lay behind this case, although much can be deduced. The murdered man was wealthy and his land in Ameria was valuable. It would appear that, following his murder, a message was sent to Chrysogonus, a Greek freedman and intimate of Sulla, by two Amerians who were enemies of the murdered man. Although the lists of those proscribed had been officially closed on 1 June 81, Chrysogonus allegedly arranged for the name of Sextus Roscius to be added posthumously, thus ensuring his land would come up for auction. The figures quoted would suggest that the estate, valued at 6 million sesterces, was sold to Chrysogonus for 2,000 sesterces. When the young Sextus Roscius and the people of Ameria protested, it seems likely a plot was devised to shut them up for good.

The case was a political hot potato. Chrysogonus was a close associate of Sulla, and to attack him could provoke the great man's wrath; no other lawyer was prepared to take the risk. The trial was to be held in one of Sulla's newly established courts, the *quaestio de sicariis*, but, if the published version of the *Pro Roscio* is to be believed, Cicero did not flinch. His eloquent and

persuasive defence speech presented detailed facts and considerable circumstantial evidence which placed the blame for the murder on the two enemies of Roscius from Ameria. Sulla's recent harsh treatment of Crassus, who had abused his position to profit excessively from the proscriptions, gave Cicero a line of attack. He separated the crimes of Chrysogonus from the regime and reforms of Sulla, distancing the great man from his subordinate, and argued, 'Many men did many things of which Lucius Sulla knew very little ... he was too heavily engaged in restoring the damaged fabric of the republic ... he is solely responsible for establishing a peaceful settlement' (*Pro Roscio* 35). What shocked and delighted Cicero's audience in the Forum most was the attack he launched upon Chrysogonus, which focused on his lavish lifestyle and the financial rewards he had reaped from the proscriptions.

Although Sextus Roscius was found not guilty, Sulla took no action against Cicero. He had established a new system of courts and, if his reforms were to be successful, Sulla had to allow them to operate. Cicero's successful defence was a triumph and his reputation was made, but he took on so many more cases that he became ill and left Rome in 79 to travel with a group of friends to the Eastern Mediterranean. Plutarch (*Cicero* 3) suggests Cicero left because he was afraid of Sulla, but there is little evidence to support this view, and it would seem more likely that he was recuperating from overwork. His trip gave Cicero the opportunity to study in Athens and then in Rhodes, where Molon, the finest teacher of rhetoric, honed his skills in public speaking. When Cicero returned to Rome in the summer of 77 Sulla was dead and he was ready to embark upon his political career.

Note

¹ Publius Licinius Crassus, consul in 97, was the father of Marcus Licinius Crassus not the consul of 95 referred to here.

3

POMPEY AND CRASSUS, 78–70

The revolt of Lepidus

There is little contemporary source material remaining for these years and the historian is largely dependent on later writers such as Plutarch, Appian and Sallust.

Sulla's attack on the rights of the tribunes had offended the people and any politician who challenged his work could be assured of popular support. In order to safeguard the reforms after his retirement, Sulla had settled large numbers of his veterans on Italian soil who could be called upon to defend the rights of the Senate with arms if necessary. To ensure the continuing support of the Senate he had distributed the land of many of his political opponents to senators who would be reluctant to see it return to the descendants of their original owners; it was in their interest to work hard to maintain and support Sulla's reforms.

The first challenge to Sulla's work came from Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, the consul of 78, who demanded the recall of the Marians who had lost their land, return of the property and rights of Sulla's victims and restoration of the powers of the tribunate. The Senate were slow to recognise the danger he posed and, when a group of Sullan colonists at Faesulae in Etruria were attacked by farmers whose land had been confiscated, the Senate sent both Lepidus and Catulus, his optimate colleague, to the area. The two consuls immediately quarrelled, and it is possible that Lepidus actually put himself at the head of the dispossessed farmers. The Senate was determined to avoid war but failed to give Catulus the backing he needed to suppress his colleague. After insisting the men take an oath against civil war, the Senate allowed Lepidus to become governor of Transalpine and possibly also Cisalpine Gaul for the following year. It was only when he resisted a direct demand to return to Rome to hold elections and demanded a second consulship that Lepidus was recognised as a credible threat. Fear of provoking another civil war so soon after the last one may have held back many of the senators but, when they saw the stability of the Sullan system under threat, they recognised Lepidus as an enemy and their subsequent actions were concerted and vigorous.

Lepidus sent his legate, Marcus Junius Brutus, to raise troops in Cisalpine Gaul, where his family had *clientelae*, and Lepidus himself marched towards Rome at the head of an army early in 77. He was joined by the son of Cinna and by Perperna, a former governor of Sicily. As no elections had been held for 77 and there were no incoming consuls, Appius Claudius was appointed *interrex*. Some senators still argued strongly for negotiations but the SCU was hurriedly passed, largely due to pressure from Philippus, who had been a prominent Marian in the 80s but had fought for Sulla on his return, and Lepidus was declared a public enemy. Catulus was given proconsular *imperium* and put in charge of the campaign against him, and Pompey was

dispatched to Cisalpine Gaul with *propraetorian imperium* to deal with Brutus. Plutarch (*Pompey* 16) writes, ‘the situation itself, therefore, demanded Pompey, who was not long in deciding what course to take’. If his intention had been to profit from Lepidus’ plans, then Pompey’s judgement to back him in the consular elections can be seen as sound. Lepidus was defeated easily and fled to Sardinia, where he died shortly afterwards, allegedly of a broken heart caused by his wife’s unfaithfulness. Pompey laid siege to the forces of Brutus in Mutina in Cisalpine Gaul and, when Brutus eventually surrendered, had him put to death despite rumours that he had agreed to spare him if he handed himself over. Such actions earned Pompey the nickname *adulescentulus carnufex* (The Young Butcher).¹

The Senate had reacted assertively as soon as they considered their own position to be under attack. There is no evidence of factional rivalries and the senators took a united stance in the face of Lepidus’ challenge. The Senate followed Sulla’s own precedent of employing Pompey to fight the Marian rebels in Sicily and Africa, but the grant of *propraetorian imperium* to a man under thirty who was not yet a senator violated the spirit of the Sullan Constitution, which had entrusted the responsibility of defeating Rome’s enemies to mature and legitimately elected magistrates serving *primus inter pares*.

Rebels and a magic fawn

Pompey had shown himself to be an opportunist of the first order during the revolt of Lepidus, taking arms to defend the interests of the Senate against the man whose candidature he had so wholeheartedly supported only months before. Pompey's priority at all times was his own interest and how it could best be served, and when Catulus ordered Pompey to disband his army after the death of Brutus he refused because he had his eye on a new military opportunity. Metellus Pius had been fighting Sertorius in Spain for two years with little success and may have already asked for help, but the situation had become critical and he now required urgent assistance. Despite the fears of a second Hannibal threatening Italy from Spain, the consuls of 77, Mamercus Lepidus and Decimus Junius Brutus, expressed their own unwillingness to go. This campaign promised to be long and difficult and offered little financial reward, and Pompey may well have heard of their reluctance before he refused to obey Catulus' orders. If some senators were becoming wary of the young commander, there were many others prepared to use Pompey 'as hatchetman extra-ordinary' (Seagar 2002: 32). Philippus again carried the debate and secured Pompey proconsular *imperium*. In delegating the authority so recently restored by Sulla and failing to grasp the nettle themselves, the Senate was surely acting contrary to the dictator's wishes. Sulla had bowed to the charms of the 'rising sun', and Scullard (1963: 91) concludes that 'the Senate, now blinded by his audacity, failed to see the political consequences of their concession'.

Sertorius was a force to be reckoned with. He was a Sabine *novus homo* from Nursia, a town in the hills seventy miles north-east of Rome. Sabines had a legendary toughness and no doubt Sallust, who favours Sertorius in his surviving writings, would have exalted these qualities. Sallust's *History of Sertorius* is no longer extant, but Plutarch used it for his own *Life of Sertorius* in which he sought to portray him as a tragic hero who was the victim of ill fortune. Livy and Appian were less kind in their portrayals, largely because of their anti-Sallust and pro-Pompey bias, so a clear picture of Sertorius must be carefully drawn. Sertorius had begun his military career in the campaign against the Cimbri and Teutones, and had been at Arausio in 105, one of the worst disasters in Roman military history. Although he was wounded, he had swum across the River Rhone and crossed the Alps to safety. It is likely that Sertorius then served with Marius in his campaign against the German tribes, and in 97 was sent to Spain, which was divided into two separate provinces, the Eastern known as Nearer Spain, or Hispania Citerior, the western as Further Spain or Hispania Ulterior. This was his first experience of the country and Sertorius participated in a campaign in Nearer Spain against the Celtiberians, where he served with distinction. Sertorius returned to Rome, was elected quaestor for 91 and fought in the Social War, where he made his

reputation. Plutarch (*Sertorius* 4) wrote of ‘astounding deeds of courage’, and the loss of an eye remained a visible and conspicuous reminder of his daring. Sertorius returned to Rome in 89 a popular hero, probably enrolled as a senator but, although he stood as tribune, was not elected because Sulla, who was standing as consul for 88, ‘formed a party’ (*ibid.*) against him. The origins of Sulla’s dislike are not known; possibly he recognised Sertorius as a man of ability to be feared, just as he would later mark out the young Caesar.

After Sulla left for the East in 88 Sertorius joined Cinna, who had emerged as leader of anti-Sullan sentiment in the Senate, and backed him when he marched on Rome with Marius. How enthusiastically Sertorius supported their campaign is not clear in the sources, but he did his job as a soldier and was appalled by the Marian terror. Plutarch (*Sertorius* 5) insists he never ‘killed anyone to gratify his anger ... but actually rebuked Marius and by private interviews and entreaties made Cinna more moderate’, and recounts that Sertorius, possibly with the approval of Cinna, killed the murderous Bardyaei, Marius’ vicious ex-slaves. Sertorius probably became praetor in 83, a significant achievement for a *novus homo*, and served as legate to Scipio, one of the commanders in the campaign against Sulla. The sources are again unclear, but Sertorius played some role, deliberate or innocent, in the collapse of the terms agreed between Scipio and Sulla and the resulting defection of Scipio’s army.

The new consuls for 82, Carbo and young Marius, lacked the military skills to defeat Sulla, and Sertorius, a *novus homo* with impeccable military credentials, found himself ‘forced once again to serve the very sort of pretentious, noble incompetents he had been subordinate to since his youth’ (Spann 1987: 38). When he spoke out, Sertorius was given men and funds and sent to Spain as proconsul, to get him out of the way. The province was very unsettled because ‘the rapacity and insolence of Roman officials sent there from time to time had made [it] hostile to the Empire in all its aspects’ (Plutarch, *Sertorius* 6), therefore Sertorius immediately remitted many of the onerous taxes and ended the practice of quartering Roman troops inside the towns; by treating the Spaniards with respect he won them over. Sertorius also started to prepare for war, presumably in anticipation of Sulla’s victory, news of which probably reached Spain in December 82.

Sulla added Sertorius to the proscription lists, declared him an outlaw, and sent an army against him in April 81. Sertorius initially fled to North Africa and linked up with a fleet of Cilician pirates, an action that appears unpatriotic, but Plutarch (*Sertorius* 7) insists the pirates found him and not vice versa, and that his willingness to accept their help was because he had exhausted all other possibilities. Sertorius returned to Spain at the request of the Lusitani, a Spanish tribe, and agreed to become their commander, addressing them as allies, *socii*, which would imply no promises of independence, although the Spaniards who supported him wanted fair government and also freedom from Roman domination. Sertorius’ own aim

was to retake the governorship, and he claimed to be fighting against the illegal rule of Sulla, not against Rome itself. Sertorius had been given a white fawn as a gift, supposedly by the goddess Diana, which was believed to possess prophetic powers and to speak to him in his dreams. It became tame and was his constant companion, tempering his harsh exterior and forbidding expression, and appealing to the naturally superstitious Spaniards, thus giving Sertorius added allure and mystery.

Sulla sent Metellus Pius to Spain in 79, assisted by Domitius Calvinus, governor of Nearer Spain. Between them they had six legions and Sertorius had upwards of 20,000 men. An elaborate game of cat-and-mouse developed, and Metellus struggled against Sertorius who knew his terrain intimately; after two years he was exhausted and had achieved nothing beyond maintaining a Roman presence in Spain. By 77 the war had escalated. Sertorius's support was now bolstered by skilled fighters such as the Celtiberians and, after the defeat of Lepidus, Marcus Perperna had brought what remained of his soldiers and ships to Spain. Sertorius had gained a trained force which included many casualties of Sulla's proscriptions, desperate to recover their rights and property and 'politically anti-Roman, seeking independence from or the destruction of Rome' (Spann 1987: 87). Sertorius now established a model government, closely resembling that of Rome itself, with a Senate and magistrates composed of men who had joined him and 'who had no future under the present regime in Rome and sought refuge or prospective return under Sertorius' banner' (Gruen 1995: 18). Lepidus had managed to attract over 100 senators to his cause and Sertorius now found himself heading something resembling a government in exile. Plutarch (*Pompey* 17) concluded that Sertorius had become the last of the great Marians 'as if for a final disease of the state, the civil wars had poured all their venom into this man'.

The arrival of Pompey in the autumn of 77 immediately revived the morale of the embattled Roman troops. Despite his military advantages Sertorius 'kept very close watch on Pompey, and was afraid of him, and therefore conducted his campaign with more caution' (*Pompey* 18). It may also explain why Sertorius entered into negotiations with Mithridates during the winter of 76–75 and, in return for ships and money, recognised his claim to Bithynia and Cappadocia. With Mithridates stirring in the East it was important to end the war in Spain quickly, but in 76 Pompey lost 10,000 men when Sertorius captured and sacked the city of Lauro and, although Metellus defeated part of Sertorius' army at Italica, a pitched battle between Pompey and Sertorius at the River Sucro in 75 was indecisive. By 74 there was an urgent need for more men and supplies and Pompey appealed to the Senate. A copy of his letter is recorded by Sallust (*Historiae* 2.98) and reveals a desperate situation. Pompey warned that, without immediate help, the war would move from Spain to Italy. Although this seems unlikely, the letter created the alarm Pompey intended, and two legions were immediately dispatched, largely due to the efforts of the consul Lucius Lucullus, no friend of Pompey but, as

Gruen (1995: 20) observes, 'political divisions in the Curia ceased at the point of national emergency'. There is no evidence to suggest the Senate had been deliberately withholding men and supplies; they had no reason to do so. Pompey was fighting on their side and they readily granted his requests. Nevertheless, 74 was a crisis year (see below). Mithridates was in collusion with both Sertorius and the pirates and, although he had not yet invaded Bithynia, the appointment of Lucullus to Cilicia and Asia, Marcus Cotta to Bithynia and the praetor Marcus Antonius to tackle piracy in the Mediterranean would suggest a concerted senatorial plan to tackle all their enemies; the means to finish the job in Spain must be seen as part of that policy.

Sertorius also had been experiencing difficulties and suffered a major defeat at the largest pitched battle of the war, at Segontia during summer 75. Tensions were evident between the Spanish and Roman elements in the army, and there was a steady stream of desertions to Metellus which continued through 74. The war had been long and Sertorius's cautious strategy had not led to victory. He responded to criticism with reprisals, thus intensifying dissent, and by 73 Spanish support started to fall away. It was rumoured that his personality had changed and had become harsh and unyielding. Appian (1.113) portrays Sertorius as a monster, now afflicted with 'a heaven-sent madness', but Plutarch (*Sertorius* 10) must be closer to the truth when he writes, 'as his cause grew hopeless he became harsh towards those who did him wrong'. Perperna and his closest supporters turned against him and murdered Sertorius in late 73. Few were prepared to transfer their support to a new leader, and Perperna was easily defeated, captured and put to death by Pompey. Some Spaniards fought on in pursuit of freedom from Rome until they too were subdued.

Pompey settled Spain, devastated by ten years of warfare, with humanity and common sense, while also extending his own patronage. This was the same approach he had used in Sicily during Sulla's dictatorship and would use later against the pirates. Some grants of citizenship were made, some Spaniards were resettled and many Italians were given Spanish land. A trophy was set up, high in the Pyrenees, announcing that Pompey had taken 876 towns from the Alps to the boundaries of Further Spain; Metellus was not mentioned. Sertorius' name also did not appear on the monument; possibly no one wanted to record that Roman had yet again fought Roman, although Florus (2.10.9) concluded that Pompey and Metellus 'desired the struggle to be considered a foreign rather than a civil war in order that they might celebrate a triumph'.

Sertorius was an able general but it is not clear what he would have done if he had defeated Pompey. At several points during the war he had attempted to negotiate, and it would appear that his greatest wish was to bring the civil war to an end. Sertorius seems to have lacked the killer instincts of Sulla. If he had entered Rome at the head of a victorious army, it is likely he would have

restored the tribunate and undone Sulla's work from within the existing system; there is no suggestion he planned a dictatorship or any other domination of the state. Spann (1987: 152) concludes, 'Sertorius's talents were wasted, his life lost, in an inglorious struggle which he did not want, could not win, and could not escape.'

The return of the king

The beleaguered Sullan Senate, reeling from the revolt of Lepidus, the campaign against Sertorius in Spain and the increasing activities of pirates, now faced again the great enemy of the 80s, Mithridates of Pontus. The Treaty of Dardanus between Sulla and Mithridates had never been formally ratified by the Senate, despite a direct request from Mithridates in 79, since when he had been steadily gathering resources and had amassed between 100,000 and 150,000 men and 400 ships. He had established links with both Sertorius and the pirates, was on good terms with his son-in-law Tigranes of Armenia, and had also taken over part of Syria and Cappadocia. The lion was stirring.

In 75 the colourful old king Nicomedes IV of Bithynia died and bequeathed his kingdom to Rome. The precedent for such a bequest had been set in 133 by Attalus of Pergamum, and had been emulated in 96 by Ptolemy Apion in Cyrenaica. All three men had died without heirs. The kingdom of Bithynia lay on the south-west shore of the Black (Euxine) Sea, adjacent to Mithridates' kingdom of Pontus. It was a valuable prize strategically. If Rome took it as a province they would control the entrance to the Black Sea and their presence would also alter the balance of power in the region. A bastard son of Nicomedes attempted to contest the will but, after his claim was rejected, the Senate decided to proceed. When the governor of Cilicia died in summer 74, his province and Asia were assigned to Lucius Licinius Lucullus who, with Catulus and Hortensius, had led the optimates since Sulla's death. Lucullus was an educated man, well versed in literature and philosophy, who had served alongside Sulla in the Social War and against Mithridates. His military and literary talents had come together in his *History of the Social War*, which Plutarch read in its original Greek. Lucullus was consul in 74 and had been expecting to go to Cisalpine Gaul as governor, but it was becoming clear that Mithridates would resist any attempt to take Bithynia. Lucullus had the military experience required to meet such a challenge and was a good choice, although there were rumours he had pulled strings to secure the prestigious command. He was commissioned for war even before Mithridates had made a hostile move, and was assigned the legions already in Cilicia and Asia, some of which had fought in Sulla's war. His co-consul, Marcus Aurelius Cotta, was appointed to the new province of Bithynia and given men and ships to resist any attack. The Sullan Senate was operating as Sulla would have wished; consulars were assuming commands commensurate with their experience and office.

It is unclear from the sources whether Mithridates had already mobilised his forces and exactly when the war started, although Appian (1.111) suggests it got under way in the spring of 73. Lucullus had planned to invade Pontus with five legions but Mithridates struck first, taking only nine days to invade

Bithynia, and he defeated Cotta in a naval battle which destroyed the Roman fleet and drove him into the walled city of Chalcedon. Lucullus pushed westwards to relieve Cotta and encountered the bulk of Mithridates' forces attempting to take control of Cyzicus which Lucullus had hoped to secure as his main port of entry for troops and supplies as it had a double harbour. The sources suggest that the Romans were heavily outnumbered, so Lucullus decided against a direct attack. He placed his legions in the hills above the port and, with the help of the townspeople, was able to resist all attempts by Mithridates to take it. Lucullus 'stamped on the stomach of Mithridates' (Plutarch, *Lucullus* 11) and, as winter approached, the king abandoned his plans and evacuated his troops, sustaining significant losses. The Roman generals hoped to seize the initiative and Lucullus entered western Pontus in the summer of 72. He lured Mithridates to the heart of the country but the old king was reluctant to fight a major battle and decided he would fare better in the rockier terrain to the East, where he hoped his son-in-law, Tigranes of Armenia, would rally to his support. His retreat was a disaster and Lucullus was able to attack and pick off the disorganised Pontic forces, forcing Mithridates into Armenia and the arms of the now reluctant Tigranes, who kept him a virtual prisoner for over a year. This freed Lucullus to conquer Pontus over the following eighteen months.

The war could have ended at this point. All Lucullus lacked by 70 was the person of Mithridates, and he sent his legate Appius Claudius into Armenia to negotiate the hand-over. Tigranes was a very successful king who had ruled Armenia since 96, taking the title King of Kings in 82, but Appius showed him little respect, behaved with typical patrician haughtiness, and allegedly intrigued behind his back. Appius' instructions from Lucullus and Lucullus' letter to Tigranes are both lost and it is impossible to know whether Appius was following instructions when he threatened to invade Armenia if Tigranes did not hand Mithridates over. Unsurprisingly, Tigranes refused and prepared to defend himself in response to this insulting behaviour. When Appius returned, Lucullus had no choice but to carry out the threat, and he invaded Armenia in the summer of 69. Sulla had been aware of the danger of independent action by promagistrates far from Rome, and his *lex de maiestate* had stipulated that no governor could start a war on his own initiative. Whether this applied to a situation within a military campaign was arguable but the spirit of the law was clear, and no evidence exists that Lucullus had the Senate's permission for this action; the consuls of 70, Pompey and Crassus, were no friends of Lucullus, and most unlikely to give him their support. During the debate over the *lex Manilia* in 66, Cicero (23) implied that Lucullus had no authority to launch the invasion but had been attracted by the wealth of Pontus, and Quinctius, praetor in 68, alleged that it was warmongering of the worst kind, as Tigranes was guilty of no aggression to Rome and had given no assistance to Mithridates.

Although Lucullus appears to have escalated the war single-handedly, his

campaign of 69 was extremely successful. Three legions pushed towards the southern capital, Tigranocerta, and he defeated Tigranes in early October. Tigranes retreated to the north, and the summer of 68 was particularly tough for the Roman forces, who endured a long and difficult march of 1,500 km to the northern capital, Artaxata. This achieved little and the weather became stormy and unpredictable as the campaigning season drew to its end. Lucullus' soldiers refused to advance any further, so Lucullus changed direction and marched south to the heavily fortified city of Nisibis, where he laid siege, hoping to draw Tigranes to its aid. The king failed to rise to the bait and, while Lucullus was pinned down, Tigranes recaptured much of the territory lost to the Romans the year before.

Lucullus now faced a mutiny among his troops, some of whom had been serving in the East since 88. Conditions were arduous and there had been little booty, as Lucullus had imposed a ban on plundering. There were rumours that Lucullus was planning to invade the south of Armenia again in the hope of bringing Tigranes to a pitched battle, or even planning an attack on Parthia, which would have further escalated the war. Acting as *agent provocateur* in the mutiny was Publius Clodius Pulcher, brother of Appius Claudius and brother of Lucullus's wife Claudia. He had been serving as a military legate and certainly played a part inciting the troops against their commander; Dio (36.14) attributes Clodius' behaviour to his 'innate love of revolution'. Plutarch gives a vivid account of the episode in his *Life of Lucullus* which was largely based upon two of Sallust's lost histories of the period, the Fourth and Fifth. According to Plutarch, who was probably recounting Sallust's words, Clodius addressed the troops as 'the soldiers' friend', although Tatum concludes that the speech 'represents the sentiments of Sallust as he composed his *Historiae* rather than Clodius as he instigated his mutiny' (1999: 47). Clodius argued that 'there was never to be an end to their many wars and labours, but instead they were spending their lives waging war with every nation and roaming over every land' (Plutarch, *Lucullus* 34). He drew attention to the lack of booty and suggested that the soldiers were 'getting for themselves no appropriate return but instead escorting the camels and wagons of Lucullus, which were laden with gold vessels inlaid with gems' (*ibid.*). Lucullus was able to restore order and the troublesome youth was dispatched to Marcius Rex, another of his brothers-in-law, recently appointed proconsul in Cilicia.

Lucullus had been in the East since 73. He had escalated the war, his strategy of bringing Tigranes to battle had failed to produce a decisive defeat and, with no end in sight, there was a growing campaign in Rome to recall him. In 70, while Appius Claudius was at the court of Tigranes, Lucullus had been in Asia. The province was extremely wealthy but was reeling from the punitive impositions placed upon it by Sulla before his departure in 83. The heavy indemnity of 20,000 talents he had imposed had ruined some of the cities. Lack of liquidity had forced the Asians to borrow at punitive rates of

interest, usually from Roman *publicani*, tax collectors. It has been estimated that the levels of debt increased sixfold during 70 alone, and the Asians had been forced to hand over buildings, treasures and property in settlement. Lucullus had endeavoured to assist them by capping interest rates at 12 per cent, prohibiting compound interest and ensuring that debtors paid 25 per cent of their annual income towards full and final payment. Lucullus's settlement was fair and just, and all debts were repaid over the next four years. It gave the area an opportunity to recover and prosper, and festivals called Lucullea were held in many grateful cities to honour Lucullus. Unfortunately these measures made him many enemies among the equestrian order, whose profiteering activities in Asia were now curtailed, and it was they who called the loudest for his recall, arguing that Lucullus had escalated, and now was prolonging, the war for his own glory and profit.

Spartacus

While the campaign against Sertorius continued, and the war against Mithridates escalated, the Sullan Senate faced a critical situation within the Italian peninsula. In 73 a young Thracian slave, Spartacus, who had served in the Roman army as an auxiliary, was training at a gladiatorial school in Capua owned by Batiatus, and escaped with seventy-four others, armed with 'cleavers and spits from some kitchen' (Plutarch, *Crassus* 8). They captured weapons from a wagon train they intercepted on its way to another gladiatorial school, and occupied Mount Vesuvius. Varinius Glaber, a praetor, attempted to blockade them on the mountain but was easily driven off as large numbers of runaway rural slaves and herdsmen joined Spartacus. The slaves, who had made ladders from vines and branches, descended the mountain out of sight and then attacked the 3,000 Romans from the rear. The slave army took over Campania and Lucania with a force that had now grown to about 70,000 and another attempt to attack them by two more praetors also failed. Spartacus himself 'took a proper view of the situation', and he knew his army 'could not expect to overcome the Roman power' (*Crassus* 9). He planned to retreat from Italy to enable all his followers to return to their own homelands, but the Gauls and the Germans within his ranks had other ideas and wanted to remain in Italy to plunder it, so Spartacus took his army to the south for the winter and allowed it to devastate the region. It has become fashionable to think of Spartacus as a true freedom fighter, a champion of the masses attempting to transform Roman society, but his desire to lead his army out of Italy would suggest he was a slave who wanted to go home.

The Senate were slow to react initially and the war was 'ridiculed and despised in the beginning, as being merely the work of gladiators' (Appian 1.118), but by 72 they had recognised the gravity of the situation. Both consuls of the year, Lucius Publicola and Lentulus Clodianus, took the field, each having two legions at their disposal, but they were defeated separately and again when they united. Spartacus defeated the proconsul Longinus in Cisalpine Gaul and the slave army marched south again, possibly again in pursuit of more rich pickings in Italy. The disparate force found it increasingly difficult to remain united as the immediate appeal of pillage and plunder came to outweigh the desire for liberty which had probably motivated Spartacus himself. In the deepening crisis the Senate turned to the hero of the Colline Gate, Crassus, praetor in 73. The best soldiers and commanders were already engaged in wars in Spain, the East and against the pirates, and it is possible Crassus put himself forward for the task; his ability to contribute to the funding of six new legions could have been an added attraction. Crassus may have wished to remain on terms with Pompey and prevent him being given the command against the slaves, but he may equally have wished to protect his extensive business interests as the bulk of his fortune was in land

worked by slaves within Italy (*Crassus* 2). Crassus was awarded proconsular *imperium* with six legions in addition to the four already in existence.

Spartacus was in Picenum and Crassus intended to fight him there. He gave orders to his legate, Mummius, to take two legions to follow the slave army but to avoid battle; he defied the order and was defeated. Many of Mummius's soldiers were killed but others fled the battle, discarding their weapons as they ran. Crassus took a very harsh line to restore discipline and revived the punishment of decimation. He took five hundred of the soldiers who had fled and grouped them into tens. The men drew lots and one soldier in each group was beaten to death by the other nine. Plutarch (*Crassus* 10) records the humiliation of this public spectacle of death, commenting that 'disgrace also attaches to this manner of death, and many horrible and repulsive features attend the punishment, which the whole army witnesses'. Crassus now led his men towards the slave army, driven southwards to the sea and trapped in the toe of Italy. Spartacus had been in active negotiations with a group of Cilician pirates and had hoped that boats would be made available to transport some of his army to Sicily, but the pirates 'deceived him and sailed away' (*ibid.*). The slaves attempted to build boats and rafts for themselves which proved totally inadequate, and they found themselves trapped in the Rhegium peninsula for the winter. Crassus ordered his men to dig a ditch across its entire forty-mile breadth which was 5 ft wide and in places reinforced with a wall. The slaves were unable to get out to search for food and no supplies could reach them; two attempts to break out were repulsed.

The slave army was effectively imprisoned during the winter of 72–71, but it remained intact, although it was far from united in its aims. The Senate decided to summon Pompey and Marcus Lucullus, the governor of Macedonia and younger brother of Lucius Lucullus, to assist Crassus to destroy the army and end the war. Crassus was unwilling to share the task and, more importantly, the credit, therefore he rejected all attempts by Spartacus to negotiate and, when the slaves finally broke the Roman defences and set off towards Brundisium, Crassus was hot on their heels. When news came that M. Lucullus had landed, Spartacus swung back towards Bruttium and defeated Crassus's legate, Quinctius, at Petelia. Ironically, this victory 'was the ruin of Spartacus, for it filled his slaves with over-confidence' (Plutarch, *Crassus* 11). They clamoured for battle and Spartacus was pushed into a final confrontation with Crassus in which he was killed and his slave army routed. It has been estimated that 100,000 slaves died during the revolt and the subsequent mopping-up operations.

There were many fugitives from the final battle and Crassus was ruthless in their pursuit. He rounded up 6,000 and crucified them along the Appian Way between Rome and Capua. Crassus had fought an imaginative campaign and 'had been fortunate, had shown most excellent generalship, and had exposed his person to danger', according to Plutarch (*ibid.*), but 'even in this success, fortune somehow or other included Pompey'. Many slaves had evaded capture

and about 5,000 were making their way north. They had reached Etruria, where they had the misfortune to encounter Pompey returning from Spain, and he captured and killed them all. Pompey made much of the role that he played, and claimed that 'he himself had finished off the war entirely' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 21). Velleius (2.30) was far more generous in his assessment, writing that 'The glory of having ended this war belonged wholly to Marcus Crassus'.

Voices raised in protest: the tribunes stir

When Sulla retired, he had assumed his enlarged and restored Senate would resume collective responsibility for the government of Rome. He had hoped to enhance the authority of the Senate, not just by restoring its full powers, but by increasing it in size and thereby giving it the appearance of power. The Senate was now large, 600 in total, and only about a quarter had any previous senatorial experience. Newly created senators from the army, the *equites* and the new citizens heavily outnumbered the old aristocracy, which could suggest it was divided and plagued by inexperience and internal differences, but what they lacked in experience they made up for in loyalty to a system of which they were now an integral part and which they sought to preserve. Badian (1970: 30–1) analysed those who held the consulship between 78 and 59, concluding that half did not even hold provincial commands, and that the oligarchy were idle and incompetent. Closer examination would suggest that this was not the case and that only six out of forty chose not to take further office. The top jobs remained largely in the hands of the old families who had always dominated, and the tensions which had existed for generations were still alive and well. The decisiveness of the Senate's response to Sertorius, to Mithridates and to the pirates would suggest that they did appreciate the need for prompt senatorial action when Rome's empire was threatened. The Senate also had to contend with the serious economic problems that faced Rome in the mid to late 70s. Piracy was seriously disrupting trade and had led to serious food shortages and escalating prices. The cost of supporting protracted wars in Spain and the East placed a strain on public finances and manpower, and the revolt of Spartacus brought even more disruption and price instability. The Sullan Constitution, especially the measures to curtail the powers of the tribunate, had always been extremely unpopular with the people, whose economic plight gave them little reason to believe this new Senate was competent to rule. Tribunes such as Sicinius in 76 and Opimius in 75 tapped into this strength of feeling and spoke out against the restrictions on their office, choosing to do so by attacking the Senate. Opimius was later prosecuted for going beyond the bounds of his, and his money and property were seized as punishment. In 74 Quinctius kept up the pressure and revived the tribunician *contio*, a public meeting, to attack Sulla's measures even more openly, also criticising the senatorial juries who had allowed some recent overt miscarriages of justice. In 73 the tribune Licinius Macer entered the fray. He continued to hold *contiones*, and Sallust (*Historiae* 3.48) recorded his speech in which he railed against 'this state of slavery engineered by Sulla' and called on the people to rise in revolt, naming Pompey as a supporter. Which words belong to Macer and which to Sallust is arguable, but several senators are named as implacable enemies of the tribunes, including Lucullus and Catulus. The threat of Spartacus would appear to have silenced

tribunician agitation in 72, but in 71 Lollius Palicanus spoke out again.

These tribunes clearly urged reform of the system but no links have been found between them and there is no evidence of a concerted or organised campaign to challenge the Sullan Senate. They were largely obscure politicians who were exploiting the public dissatisfaction caused by the hardships of the late 70s. Sustained tribunician opposition could suggest that the 70s were dominated by a struggle between the supporters and opponents of Sulla's measures, but this is too simplistic a picture. Although the Senate could take a hard-line approach to their critics, for example prosecuting Opimius after his tribunate ended, they also introduced concessions when appropriate. In 75 the consul, Gaius Aurelius Cotta, was responsible for a law, drafted in co-operation with Opimius, which reversed Sulla's ban on tribunes progressing to further office. Sallust (*ibid.*) wrote that Cotta was 'a consul from the heart of the oligarchy', who had been a solid supporter of Sulla, and attributed this action to motives of self-interest and fear of the people. There had been attacks on individual magistrates in the streets as the economic problems worsened and this law appears to be a conciliatory gesture to silence mounting criticism of the Senate. The measure was extremely popular with younger nobles, who could again use the office of tribune as a stepping stone to a political career. No doubt Cotta faced opposition, particularly from the most hard-line optimates in the Senate, but he must have been supported by a majority of senators to get such a measure passed. When tribunician powers were fully restored in 70 there was little senatorial reaction; possibly they had come to see tribunes as an arm of the Republic and not as the fist that had so angered Sulla.

Holding Rome hostage?

The sources suggest rivalry and mutual dislike between Pompey and Crassus at this stage that went far beyond the normal competitiveness of Roman politics. They had both served under Sulla but, while Crassus had stayed in Rome and feathered his own nest during the proscriptions, Pompey had been given a command against the Marians and awarded a Triumph. Although Crassus's wealth had made him a figure of grudging respect, Pompey's flamboyant military campaigns had made him popular with the people, and his assertion that he had defeated Spartacus must have greatly irritated Crassus, who needed to consider his next step carefully. When he returned to Rome in 71 Crassus was awarded an ovation for his defeat of Spartacus. The victor of the slave revolt in Sicily in 135 had also received this honour rather than a Triumph as a servile war was not considered as important as a foreign war. Although it was customary for the victor to receive a crown of myrtle, Crassus was awarded a crown of laurel, the triumphal crown. This was a privilege and would suggest he was amply rewarded for his recent success, although it compared poorly with the Triumph Pompey was awarded for his victory over Sertorius.

Pompey had announced that he would keep his army intact until the return of Metellus Pius so that they could triumph together; Crassus had also retained his army arguing that Pompey's behaviour made this acceptable. Plutarch (*Pompey* 21) writes that there was widespread concern about Pompey's return, as 'men said he would not disband his army, but would make his way by force of arms and take absolute power like that of Sulla', but there is no evidence to suggest this was his intention or that the Senate was intimidated into making concessions. Pompey was still an equestrian and had never officially entered the Senate, but to stand as quaestor and make his way up the political ladder in the conventional way was now unthinkable. It was clear that he should seek the consulship as the only office commensurate with his achievements. Pompey may have been a distortion of the Sullan system but he had spent a decade fighting to uphold it, and it was not unreasonable to relax the rules in his case. There had always been a place in the early Republic for flexibility and it could be argued this was a parallel situation. Pompey had served Rome well and it would appear that his consulship was acceptable to many within the Senate.

Crassus was old enough to stand as consul, had served as praetor in 73 and was a member of the Senate; despite their personal differences, it made sense to seek office with Pompey. Pompey disbanded his army after his Triumph at the end of 71, Crassus somewhat earlier, and neither threatened violence. Although there were two powerful armies outside the gates of Rome, it was not the case that a terrified Senate granted Pompey permission to stand as consul because they had no option. Two civilians became consuls at the

beginning of 70, not two commanders.

The consulship of Crassus and Pompey, 70

Pompey made it clear in his first public speech as consul-elect that he intended to introduce reforms during his consulship. He had asked a friend, Varro, to write a handbook of senatorial procedure to guide him and announced that he would be turning his attention to tribunician reform, the court and jury system, and provincial government. The relationship between Crassus and Pompey was frosty from the outset and they co-operated only to introduce a law which fully restored the powers of the tribunes. The Senate had accepted that there was no alternative to this reform, which passed with little opposition from the oligarchy. It was a popular measure with the people because 'there was nothing on which the Roman people had more frantically set their affections, or for which they had a greater yearning, than to behold that office again' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 21). 'Among the people the power of Pompey was great', according to Plutarch, and Crassus must have hoped that some of the gratitude would rub off on him as this measure was passed 'to court the favour of the many' (*Pompey* 22). Unfortunately the animosity between Pompey and Crassus intensified to such a degree that 'their contentiousness rendered their consulship barren politically and without achievement' (*Crassus* 12).

The other measures of this year may not have resulted from co-operation between the consuls or their own political wills but were significant nonetheless. Gellius and Clodianus, the two consuls of 72 who had failed so conspicuously to hold Spartacus back, were appointed censors, the first since 86. They expelled sixty-four senators whom they considered corrupt, including Lentulus Sura, consul in 71 and destined to play a key role in the Catilinarian Conspiracy, and Antonius Hybrida, unsuccessfully prosecuted for corruption in 76 and future consul with Cicero in 63. Two further Bills were sponsored by a tribune Plautius and welcomed by both Pompey and the Senate. The first restored citizenship to the supporters of Lepidus and Sertorius and the second granted land to the veterans of Metellus Pius and Pompey, although this was not enacted, on the grounds of expense.

The issue of the courts and senatorial juries was tackled in the autumn. Pompey had insisted that he intended to deal personally with this matter but had done nothing, and the reform was the work of a praetor, Lucius Aurelius Cotta, brother of the consul of 75 who had first tackled tribunician reform. He was an optimite, became consul in 65, and was held in high regard by many senators. There had been some recent miscarriages of justice due to the corruption of the Sullan senatorial juries. The trial of Oppianicus in 74, who had been accused of poisoning his stepson, Aulus Cluentis, had involved extensive bribery of jurors, and there had been several unsuccessful prosecutions of provincial governors, such as Terentius Varro, accused of corruption in Asia but acquitted because of the skill of his lawyer Hortensius

and some marked ballots. Cotta's *lex Aurelia* removed the senatorial monopoly of the juries, replacing it with a three-way split of senators, *equites* and *tribuni aerarii*, a group immediately below the *equites* in rank and sharing similar financial interests. This reform was not an attack on the senatorial order and appears to have faced little opposition during its passage. It is said there had been talk of a return to completely equestrian juries and, if this was the case, Cotta's proposals would have been much more acceptable to the Senate.

Cicero always insisted that there was a causal link between his prosecution of Verres in August and the legal reforms of 70, but the *lex Aurelia* was already in the public domain before his case was heard, although Cicero's assiduous investigation of the abuses of Verres' powers undoubtedly underlined the urgent need for such a measure. His career had been progressing very well since he returned to Rome in 77. Cicero had married Terentia, a girl from a wealthy and well connected family whose stepsister was a Vestal Virgin. The marriage had improved his financial position and further expanded his social circle, and in 76 Cicero had been elected quaestor. When the lots had been drawn, he was sent to Sicily to work with Sextus Peducaeus the Roman governor. Cicero was determined to prove that efficient and fair government in the provinces was possible, and his work in Sicily was exemplary. He was responsible for shipping large quantities of grain to the city at a time of shortages and high prices, he treated the Sicilians themselves openly and fairly and did nothing to abuse his position. Cicero wrote much later in his defence of Plancius (*Pro Plancio* 64) that he had assumed he would be congratulated for his efforts and that people in Rome would have been talking about his achievements, but he was to be sadly disappointed. His experience confirmed to Cicero that only actions conducted in the spotlight of Rome itself could bring his abilities to public attention and he wrote, 'I tried to make sure that they would have me in front of them from now on ... I did not neglect the Forum' (*Pro Plancio* 66). Cicero was ambitious politically and aspired to the consulship, normally beyond the reach of a *novus homo*, but it was a barrier he believed he could overcome by hard work, calculation and building connections. During the 70s Cicero concentrated on legal cases that drew him closer to the business class and he represented the interests of many *equites* and *publicani* in court. He also had many contacts in the *municipia* and links with the Italian aristocracy, and he defended the interests of men from the *collegia*, workers' clubs, and *sodalitates*, clubs to maintain cults. All these groups had political influence which he would call upon, and he was elected aedile for 71.

Cicero's work as quaestor earned him the lasting gratitude and affection of the Sicilians, which opened the door to the legal case which earned him the reputation of Rome's finest lawyer. Verres, governor of Sicily between 73 and 71, had ruled the province with exceptional cruelty and rapacity. The Sicilians were not permitted to plead the case themselves and approached Cicero to act

on their behalf. Cicero could not refuse; he was obliged to accept because of the bonds he had established during his quaestorship, and he acted as prosecutor. Cicero spent fifty days in Sicily in advance of the trial and collected overwhelming and incontrovertible evidence of Verres' guilt in such volume that it had to be transported back to Rome in wagons. The trial caused great public interest and reached a wide audience, as it took place when there were many visitors in Rome who had come for the elections, for the census and also for the games which Pompey had sponsored. The Sicilians had been complaining about Verres since 72 when a wealthy Sicilian, Sthenius, had publicly accused him of stealing private and public works of art. Verres' greed and ruthlessness were already a matter of widespread discussion and, in his absence, Verres found Sthenius guilty of a capital charge. Although Verres was a senator's son, he was recognised for what he was, an opportunist crook who had prospered from the instability of recent years, and many leading senators worked with Cicero to secure his conviction, such as Gnaeus Lentulus Marcellinus, consul in 56 and a patron of the Sicilians, who gave evidence against Verres personally at the trial.

Despite the general lack of goodwill towards Verres within the Senate, he had forged some significant relationships and was able to call upon several important supporters. He was defended by Hortensius, the leading advocate of the day, whose initial strategy was to delay the proceedings, as he had been elected consul for 69 and if the trial took place during his consulship he would be in a much better position to intervene. Cicero thwarted the plan by cutting out many of the preliminaries normally associated with the beginning of a trial and he immediately started to present evidence and question witnesses. Cicero was able to demonstrate that Verres had extorted 40 million sesterces during his three years as governor. In the face of such overwhelming evidence of his guilt, Verres withdrew from the trial and went into voluntary exile in Massilia, taking his ill-gotten gains with him. Plutarch (*Cicero* 8) reports that damages were assessed at a mere 3 million sesterces, which seemed hardly commensurate with Verres' crimes, and there were suspicions at the time that Cicero had been bribed to allow such a low figure, but the Sicilians were delighted with the verdict because an important precedent had been set: a corrupt Roman governor had been unable to escape punishment by bribing a jury of his peers. Although Cicero had the opportunity to deliver only one speech to the jury before Verres left Rome, he later published five other speeches that he would have delivered given the opportunity. The *Verrines* are a *tour de force* of rhetorical skill, but also a chilling indictment of the corruption that lay within provincial government and the courts. Verres had apparently boasted that the profits from his first year as governor were for himself, those from his second year were for his lawyer and patrons, and the profits from his third, the most lucrative year, would be used to pay the generous bribes demanded by the jury of his peers who would eventually acquit him of wrongdoing at his trial. Cicero was careful to portray Verres as

the exception rather than the rule, thus winning the support of the people without alienating the nobility. Cicero's exposition of Verres' crimes and open criticism of senatorial abuses in the provinces and on the juries earned him a reputation as a man prepared to stand up against corruption.

As 70 drew to a close the animosity between Crassus and Pompey showed no signs of abating. Plutarch records (*Pompey* 23) that Gaius Aurelius reported a dream to the Assembly in which Jupiter had appealed to the two men to reconcile before their consulship ended. 'Pompey stood motionless, but Crassus took the initiative', and a public reconciliation took place, although many saw it for the empty gesture that it was. The most unpopular aspects of Sulla's work had been swept away, the tribunes were restored to their full powers and the court and jury system reformed, but it is equally important to note that the majority of Sulla's reforms remained. No attack had been made upon the powers or size of the Senate, the *cursus honorum* was operating according to the rules, with the exception of the unconventional career of Pompey, and the optimates still dominated politics. Given the challenges it had faced, military, political, social and economic, the Sullan Senate was growing into the role he had assigned it.

Note

- 1 A description of Pompey by the orator of Formiae, Helvius Mancina, recorded in *Val. Max.* 6.2.

THE KEY PLAYERS, 69–64

Getting the job done: the *lex Gabinia*

The next period of Pompey's career, during which he undertook the so-called 'extraordinary commands', established him as *princeps*, the leading citizen, whose military achievements, wealth and resultant *auctoritas*, prestige and influence eclipsed those of his closest rivals. The contemporary sources for this period are more numerous and include Cicero's letters and speeches.

After their eventful consulship of 70 neither Pompey nor Crassus took proconsular office and both remained in Rome. Crassus had his business empire and political interests to tend and Pompey had his eye on another command. Lucullus was still fighting Mithridates and the unpopular war was dragging on. At some point he would be replaced, and Pompey was keen to maintain a high profile, positioning himself as a front runner. The activities of the pirates in the Mediterranean were also causing problems which required more immediate attention and could provide another opportunity. The Senate still contained a majority of optimates but their influence had been challenged by recent events. As well as the restoration of the full powers of the tribunes and the *lex Aurelia* which had overturned the Sullan jury system, sixty-four senators had been expelled in 70. The censors had also completed the enfranchisement of all remaining Italian citizens and there were many new voters without identifiable links to patrons and consequently much harder to influence during elections.

Although the Senate had little choice when they allowed Pompey to breach the *cursus honorum* and assume consular power in 70, they had not done so reluctantly or because they felt threatened; he had served them well, defending their interests through the 70s, and to expect him to take any office less than the consulate would have been unrealistic. By the early 60s, however, attitudes to Pompey had changed. The optimates seemed ready to take measures to prevent him further increasing his political influence and popularity within the city. The magistrates elected during the two years after Pompey's consulship were predominantly optimate, and there was a noticeable increase in the level of bribery in the elections, which could suggest a deliberate attempt was being made to edge Pompey's supporters out. When a tribune favourable to Pompey, Cornelius, introduced a bribery law in 67, he faced bitter and immediate opposition from the optimates, led by Gaius Piso; possibly Cornelius and Pompey had called their bluff. If the optimate intention had been to rein him in, the events of 67 show very clearly that opposition from within the Senate was no longer adequate to clip Pompey's wings.

The restoration of the full powers of the tribunes in 70 was now to pay dividends, as it was a tribune, Aulus Gabinius, who would launch Pompey into the next stage of his unconventional career. In 67 Gabinius accused Lucullus, who now led a mutinous, exhausted and dispirited army, of

deliberately prolonging the war against Mithridates for his own financial gain. The business interests of the *equites* in the region had been badly affected by the protracted fighting and they were particularly angry about Lucullus's activities in Asia, which had curtailed the extortionate moneylending of many *publicani*. His enemies had already removed Asia from Lucullus' provincial command in 69 and, although he was not recalled at this point, Cilicia was also taken from Lucullus and reassigned to Marcius Rex. In late 68 the army suffered a series of defeats throughout Pontus, where the population were resisting all attempts to establish Roman rule, and Lucullus was forced to withdraw from Armenia at the end of 67. Gabinius used this opportunity to place Bithynia and Pontus in the hands of Glabrio, consul of 67. These were bitter blows for Lucullus, and his troops, already recalcitrant, were now even less inclined to follow him. This was the first time that a tribune had interfered in the appointment of commanders, traditionally the preserve of the Senate, since the days of Marius, and Gabinius' measures were greatly resented by the optimates.

One of the most pressing problems in the early 60s was piracy, which was now endemic in the Mediterranean. There were about 100 pirate ships, moored in strongholds along the Cilician coast and organised in separate squadrons but able to operate collectively when necessary. Plutarch (*Pompey* 24) writes of 'sturdy crews, skilful pilots, and light and speedy ships', adding that they also had 'gilded sails, and purpled awnings, and silvered oars'. He suggests that piracy had become a career option for 'men whose wealth gave them power, and those whose lineage was illustrious, and those who laid claim to superior intelligence', who saw rich pickings and even 'a certain reputation and distinction' in the profession. Rome was heavily dependent on imports, and Cowell (1973: 117) suggests that up to 2,000 Roman ships were engaged in the grain trade alone, usually manned by Greeks and Syrians. The larger ships were 200–300 tons and seaworthy but, because they did not have compasses, sailed in sight of land, hugging coasts and islands, dependent on visibility and clear skies to navigate by the stars at night. The pirates' traditional tactic had been to seize ships, but by the 70s they were also attacking cities, plundering 'places of refuge and sanctuaries hitherto inviolate', such as the temple of Asclepius at Epidaurus, and 'even going up from the sea along their roads and plundering there, and sacking the neighbouring villas' (Plutarch *ibid.*)

The pirates had diversified into the extremely lucrative pursuit of kidnapping for ransom, and one of their most famous victims was Caesar. In 75 he had decided to travel to Rhodes to study oratory with Apollonius Molon, 'the most eminent teacher of oratory of that time', according to Suetonius (4). Close to the island of Pharmacussa, Caesar was captured by pirates who demanded a ransom of twenty talents. Plutarch (*Caesar* 2) writes that Caesar laughed at this sum and suggested they were short-changing themselves, as he was worth far more and proposed fifty talents as more

realistic for a person of his quality. While his companions left to raise the money, Caesar remained with the pirates and greatly entertained them by reading aloud his poems and speeches and calling them 'illiterate barbarians' if they did not appreciate his work and, 'laughingly' insisting he would have them all executed. This good humour led his captors to believe he possibly had 'a certain simplicity', and they were amused and unthreatened. After a few days Caesar's companions returned, paid the ransom and he was released. Caesar immediately travelled to Miletus, manned some ships and sailed back to apprehend his captors, who were placed in prison in Pergamum. As he had no authority to deal with them Caesar approached Marcus Iuncus, the Governor of Asia, but Marcus was preoccupied with the recent death of Nicomedes of Bithynia and took no decisive action, so Caesar returned to Pergamum and had the pirates crucified on his own authority. Suetonius (4) writes that Caesar had no option, as he had sworn to do so in their presence, although he did make sure each man's throat was 'mercifully' cut before crucifixion.

Mithridates saw the pirates as useful allies in his war against Rome, and their activities throughout the Mediterranean escalated after he invaded Bithynia in 73 (see below). Plutarch (*Pompey* 24) writes of their 'confidence and boldness during the Mithridatic war', and the Romans were scandalised by stories of captives who would be humiliated and then made to 'walk the plank'. Two praetors had been captured in 68 and another high-profile victim was the daughter of Marcus Antonius, who had made an unsuccessful early attempt to root out piracy in 102 when he was governor of Cilicia. The Sullan Senate had dispatched his son of the same name in 74, but he had been defeated at sea; an overland attack on the pirate strongholds was out of the question, as Cilicia was mountainous and contained hostile tribesmen. When Ostia was raided and the grain supply to Rome was jeopardised in 67, it was clear that action must be taken immediately. The activities of the pirates led to food shortages, high prices and business losses which affected the lives of the people in Rome directly in a way that other foreign policy did not, and the Senate had failed to deal with the issue over two generations.

Gabinus seized the initiative and proposed that an ex-consul be given proconsular *imperium* to tackle piracy. His power was to last for three years, extend over the entire Mediterranean and fifty miles inland, and be equal to that of any proconsul in a province. He was to be assigned fifteen military legates of his own choice, each with praetorian *imperium* which would allow them to operate at a distance although under a central overall command. The *lex Gabinia* did not mention Pompey by name but it was very clear that he was the choice of Gabinus and also the people. The outcry in the Senate against the proposal was led by Catulus and Hortensius, and probably only Julius Caesar spoke in favour, 'not because he cared in the least for Pompey, but because from the outset he sought to ingratiate himself with the people and win their support', according to Plutarch (*Pompey* 25), who always writes

cynically of Caesar's motives. His own experience at the hands of pirates must also have encouraged Caesar to speak out. The optimates were angry that a tribune was interfering in another command, but many were more concerned that, although Pompey was qualified for such a position, 'such unlimited and absolute power, while it was beyond the reach of envy, was yet a thing to be feared' (*ibid.*).

Although the Senate was determined to prevent the passage of the *lex Gabinia*, it was very popular with the *equites* and the people, and when it seemed likely that the senators would physically attack Gabinius, the mob seized the consul Gaius Piso and threatened his life. Two tribunes were persuaded to veto the Bill but were forced to back down in a scene reminiscent of the days of Tiberius Gracchus. Throughout the debate Pompey held back, although it was clearly a job that he coveted. His military skills were always put to best use in large-scale operations and there was no obvious alternative candidate. He protested his reluctance before the people, but some carefully rehearsed cajolery by Gabinius reminded those present of Pompey's experience and ability. Dio writes (36.31) that Catulus, now *princeps senatus*, was far from convinced. He warmly praised Pompey's undoubted skills but argued that it was dangerous to grant 'to any one man so many positions of command one after another', adding that it was 'not forbidden by the laws but had been found by experience to be most perilous'. Catulus reminded the Senate of the recent excesses of Marius and Sulla and suggested that human nature, if indulged with continuous power, could find itself unwilling 'to abide by ancestral customs'. Rome had a tried and tested system of sending lawfully elected magistrates to deal with crises abroad, and Catulus also questioned the wisdom of giving 'some strange and hitherto unheard-of command to a private individual [*privatus*]'. This argument should be seen as rather disingenuous, as all promagistrates were technically *privati* who acted as magistrates when they held promagisterial office. The difference in Pompey's case was the extent of the power now being proposed, and this lay behind Catulus's objections. He was also concerned about the practicalities of managing such a mammoth military operation, but even this objection was shouted down by the people who insisted that Catulus could replace Pompey if he was killed during the campaign.

Pompey withdrew from Rome and returned at dead of night once it was clear that the opposition had failed and the *lex Gabinia* had passed. It is said that the price of grain dropped immediately after Pompey's appointment, so confident were the people of his success, and some of the resulting popularity must have rubbed off on Caesar, who had demonstrated such public support. The *lex Gabinia* was followed by another law which assigned Pompey 500 ships, 120,000 men, 5,000 cavalry, twenty-four legates, the number now increased from the original fifteen, and two military quaestors – unprecedented resources which far exceeded those granted by the Senate to Marcus Antonius in 74. The sources disagree on the nature and extent of

Pompey's *imperium*. Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.25) claims it was greater than that of any other proconsul and Plutarch (*Pompey* 25) writes that Pompey had 'an out-and-out monarchy and irresponsible power over all men', but it seems likely that it was an equal power, *imperium aequum* not *imperium maius*, as claimed by Velleius (2.31), our earliest source. Seager discusses the men chosen by Pompey as legates, concluding that this was his first opportunity to 'repay old debts and attempt to create new obligations' (2002: 46). Some had been of recent service to Pompey such as the censors of 70, Gellius Publicola and Lentulus Clodianus, but he chose few of his closest military associates. In their place were men from the heart of the political establishment such as Metellus Nepos, Lentulus Marcellinus, consul in 56, Pupius Piso, consul in 61, and others such as the scholar Varro and Sisenna, a historian. It must surely be a sign of Pompey's own confidence in his plan that he chose 'to seize the chance of establishing distinguished connections' (*Pompey* 47) rather than appointing the most skilled commanders for the task. Thirteen of his legates came from consular families and ten were patricians. Pompey was attempting to mitigate the unpopularity of the tribune's law by involving members of the ruling elite fully in the campaign, thus ensuring he could share the credit for any success with the Senate.

Pompey divided the Mediterranean into thirteen areas and first targeted the western Mediterranean and Sicily, Africa and Sardinia, the areas which supplied grain to Rome. Within forty days the pirates were driven towards Cilicia and the Eastern Mediterranean. Although Pompey had to return to Rome to deal with the consul Gaius Piso, who had been attempting to sabotage recruitment, he swiftly returned to the campaign and sailed to Cilicia. Within three months a decisive battle had been fought and, when the stronghold of Coracesium in Cilicia was destroyed the pirate menace was defeated. The retribution meted out by the pirates had always been brutal and merciless, but Pompey chose to deal with his prisoners in a very different way. According to Plutarch (*Pompey* 27) he 'determined to transfer the men from the sea to land, and let them have a taste of gentle life by being accustomed to dwell in cities and to till the ground', and many were settled in the towns and on the land in Cilicia, in southern Asia and in Achaea. He had taken a similar approach in Sicily and in Spain; the opportunity to increase the number of his clients always informed Pompey's treatment of those he had defeated.

News of Pompey's clemency spread to Crete, where Metellus Pius, his colleague in the campaign against Sertorius, was now governor and conducting a campaign of an altogether more punitive nature against the pirates still on the island. These pirates wrote to Pompey and asked for his intervention on their behalf and, always eager to extend his influence, Pompey sent one of his legates, Octavius, to bring the two sides together. Unfortunately Pompey appeared to be taking sides with the pirates against Metellus, which tarnished his success, and Metellus had the pleasure of

publicly insulting Octavius in front of the entire army before returning him to Pompey. Metellus then subdued the island his way, earning himself the title Creticus.

The revenge of the knights: the *lex Manilia*

Rome was now ‘overflowing with provisions’ (*ibid.*). Pompey’s success more than vindicated the controversial nature of his appointment and left his opponents considerably weakened. His campaign against the pirates had been swift and formidable, and there was almost no piracy in the Mediterranean after 67, although there are some later reports of limited activity, particularly against Syria. His successes had been mirrored in the East by further failures on the part of Lucullus to bring the war against Mithridates to a successful conclusion and 7,000 Roman soldiers had been killed, including twenty-four military tribunes, when Mithridates had won his greatest victory, at Zela in the early summer of 67, and regained Pontus. Lucullus’s mutinous and exhausted soldiers were unco-operative. His replacements, Glabrio and Marcius Rex, appointed by Gabinus through the Assembly, had arrived during the summer before Zela, and problems of co-operation between the three men made a difficult situation worse. Even the Senate could now appreciate that Lucullus had served long enough.

In 66 another tribune, Manilius, proposed that the Eastern command be transferred to Pompey together with the provinces of Cilicia and Bithynia-Pontus, and that he should be assigned men and money for the campaign. The senatorial opposition was vocal but much less intense than in the previous year. Catulus and Hortensius restated the objections they had raised against the pirate command, arguing it was dangerous to give so much power to one man. There was sympathy for Lucullus, who would be ‘robbed of the glory that he had earned through his achievements and was being replaced by someone who would merely reap the honour of a triumph rather than undertake the difficulties of a war’ (*Pompey* 30), but four leading ex-consuls spoke in favour of the Bill, including C. Scribonius Curio, a prominent Sullan in the 70s. Pompey had proved his ability against the pirates with the help of legates from some of the best families in the Senate. Caesar again spoke in favour of the Bill. There is no evidence he had any close association with Pompey, he was just one of many up-and-coming politicians, but to lend support so openly to two such controversial pieces of legislation, both of which were extremely popular with the people, would have certainly attracted attention.

Cicero now came forward and spoke on behalf of Pompey in his first political speech, the *Pro lege Manilia*, which he made to the Assembly. He had largely remained aloof from major political arguments in his early career and had not backed the *lex Gabinia* publicly, as he was standing in the elections of 67 for the praetorship and did not want to jeopardise the goodwill he had built up among the nobility. The calculation had paid off and Cicero was returned top of the poll, a great achievement for a *novus homo*. He now aspired to the consulship: it was important to court as many senators as

possible and also to widen his electoral appeal. Cicero did not know Pompey personally but appreciated his ability, influence and popularity, and to be linked with his success could be of electoral advantage. He wrote to Atticus (1.1), 'you know the game I am playing and how vital I think it not only to keep old friends but to win new ones'. The *lex Manilia* had a much easier passage than the *lex Gabinia*, as many senators accepted the importance of replacing Lucullus, and Cicero could commend Pompey and his noble legates without alienating the political elite. His speech in 66 was a carefully calculated balancing act. Lucullus's successes were examined and applauded, but then Cicero focused upon the value of Asia and the need to finish off Mithridates swiftly to restore economic stability to the area and also to Rome. Many senators could identify with this approach, but so could many *equites* who had suffered financially because trade and revenue had been lost, taxes had not been collected, and credit in Rome was under pressure. Cicero had already earned their respect because of his activities in the courts, and his speech was clearly designed to reassure them he had their interests at heart.

Focusing on his 'remarkable military knowledge' and 'extraordinary personal gifts', Cicero (*Pro Manilia* 49–63) argued that Pompey's successes spoke for themselves. He was not following the normal career path in Roman politics but every deviation had been triumphant and, Cicero added ironically, many were 'remarkable and revolutionary innovations ... brought about as a result of enactments by distinguished national leaders of whom Quintus Catulus was one'. Cicero reminded his audience that some of Rome's greatest successes had resulted from 'extraordinary commands' such as this, citing Scipio against the Carthaginians and Marius against the Cimbri and Teutones. Although Cicero must have alienated some of the more hard-line senators, his voice of reason and conciliation appealed to others and he was very careful to treat the Bill's detractors with the greatest respect. Cicero certainly courted the people by tapping into the popularity of Pompey and identifying himself, the *novus homo*, with the needs of the ordinary voters. His support for Pompey was popular and Cicero's speech won over more than he alienated, thus broadening his electoral appeal as he had intended.

The tribes voted unanimously to appoint Pompey commander. He was absent from Rome in Cilicia, concluding his campaign against the pirates, and Plutarch (*Pompey* 30) described his public demonstration of reluctance to take on a task of such magnitude. As he had been angling for it so long, his protestations were very unconvincing and rather irritating, even to his supporters. The nature of his *imperium* again is unclear in the available sources, but they suggest that it was now *imperium maius*. It made sense to add the power of granting peace or making war without reference to the Senate, as the distances involved in a campaign such as this delayed communications. Many decisions had to be made immediately, although they would need to be referred to the Senate later for debate and any agreements made would require their ratification. It is likely Pompey retained all the

legates he had chosen against the pirates. He was joined in Cilicia by Gabinius, now untrammelled by the office of tribune, and the two Metelli brothers Nepos and Celer, his brothers-in-law, and as his deputy he chose Afranius.

It was extremely important for Pompey to fight against Mithridates and defeat him decisively, as any attempt to come to terms would be seen as weakness, so Pompey approached Phraates of Parthia, who agreed to attack Armenia to escalate the war. Mithridates was sufficiently concerned about this arrangement to present a peace proposal but, as Pompey's objective was to fight and to win, he conveyed completely unacceptable terms to Mithridates, who was forced to fight on. Pompey travelled on to Galatia to take control of the army and found a senatorial commission already organising the conquests of Lucullus. Pompey was determined that any arrangements made should reflect his own achievements and not those of Lucullus, whom he greatly disliked, and 'he left nothing undisturbed that Lucullus had done, but remitted punishments in many cases, and took away rewards, and did everything, in a word, with an eager desire to show the admirers of that general that he was wholly without power' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 31). When the two men met, the atmosphere was tangibly hostile. They were both escorted by lictors, their rods wreathed with laurel, and Plutarch records how those of Lucullus were fresh whereas Pompey's appeared 'withered and altogether faded'. When fresh vegetation was added to the Pompeian rods by the Lucullan lictors 'this was held to be a sign that Pompey was coming to rob Lucullus of the fruits of his victories and of his glory'. After the forced initial pleasantries, Pompey accused Lucullus of greed, while Lucullus drew angry attention to Pompey's habit 'of alighting, like a lazy carrion-bird, on bodies that others had killed, and tearing to pieces the scattered remnants of wars' (*ibid.*), the inference being that he had profited from the work of Lucullus but also from that of Catulus, Metellus and Crassus, who had been the true victors over Lepidus, Sertorius and Spartacus. Lucullus retained just 1,600 men, the remainder joined Pompey. He had been humiliated by his mutinous army, by the Senate in Rome, which failed to prevent the *lex Manilia*, but above all by his upstart replacement, and Lucullus was a vengeful man who proved a formidable adversary when Pompey returned to Rome in December 62.

Mithridates was now on the run. His attachment to Tigranes had been severed, and he fled north to the Bosphorus. In Armenia, the son of Tigranes, who was also the son-in-law of Phraates of Parthia, co-operated when the Parthian forces invaded Armenia and then joined Pompey and invited him into the country. With defeat staring him in the face, Tigranes surrendered, having heard that 'Pompey was rather mild and gentle in his disposition' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 33). Tigranes rode into the Roman camp, handed over his sword, took off his diadem (crown) and 'made as if to lay it at his [Pompey's] feet, and, what was most humiliating of all, would have thrown himself down and clasped his knees in supplication'. Pompey placed himself between father

and son and confirmed Tigranes on the throne of his original kingdom, removing from him those lands he had gained during the war. He imposed an indemnity of 6,000 talents and gave the young Tigranes the kingdom of Sophene in the south-west of Armenia, which the young man clearly thought totally inadequate. His subsequent behaviour demonstrated his unreliability and Sophene was eventually restored to his father. The young Tigranes was taken to Rome in chains and appeared in Pompey's triumph of 61. With Armenia subdued and in friendly hands, Pompey no longer needed to pay lip service to the Parthian king, who was left wondering whether his empire was safe from a future Roman invasion.

Pompey went in pursuit of Mithridates and invaded Pontus, which was under Roman control by the autumn of 65. Mithridates was in the Crimean Bosphorus, gathering a considerable force around him but very elusive. Pompey decided to blockade the area and starve him out of hiding but, unfortunately, grain was plentiful in the area and his plan failed. Dio (37.11) suggests that Mithridates was building up forces to invade Italy, which seems unlikely. In the *Pro Murena* of December 63, Cicero argued (22) for the need of a soldier consul to defeat Catiline's army but did not mention any threat to Italy from Mithridates, surely an opportunity missed if Dio's suggestion had any basis in truth.

Although Mithridates remained uncaptured, Pompey was stamping Roman authority firmly upon the entire area. When relations broke down between Tigranes and Phraates, who had invaded Gordyene, Pompey intervened, demanded it be handed over immediately, and Afranius returned it to the Armenian king. As Pompey moved south, Antiochus of Commagene also submitted to Roman rule and was recognised as an independent king. Pompey arrived at Antioch late in 64, where he met Antiochus XIII of Syria, who had been supported as king by Lucullus, although there was another claimant to the throne. Pompey decided to annex Syria and extend direct Roman rule to end the internal instability and strengthen it against possible Parthian attacks.

With the stability of the entire area firmly at the top of his agenda, Pompey now turned his attention to Judaea. Two rivals for the throne, Aristobulus and Hyrcanus, had both been angling for Roman support and the situation was further complicated because the Nabataean king, Aretas, had given his backing to Hyrcanus. The legate, Aemilius Scaurus, who had gone to Judaea in 64 ahead of Pompey, favoured Aristobulus, but Pompey was keen to deal with Aretas before reaching a decision himself. Pompey's hand was forced when Aristobulus broke ranks and withdrew to Jerusalem. The city was easily taken when supporters of Hyrcanus opened the gates to the Romans, but they were able to storm the Temple quarter on the Day of Atonement only after a three-month siege. Pompey's famous entry into the Holy of Holies was mitigated somewhat by his decision to take none of the treasure as loot but was regarded as desecration nonetheless. Pompey decided to make Hyrcanus high priest and ethnarch of Judaea rather than king, and Aristobulus was

captured and sent to Rome. This settlement was very acceptable to the religious leaders in Judaea, who disliked the idea of a secular ruler and had always favoured a theocracy. Pompey made no attempt to annex Judaea because, unlike Syria, he believed that the area could be ruled effectively by its own leaders.

During the siege in Jerusalem news arrived that Mithridates was dead. The old king had evaded capture for three years and had deprived Pompey of the glory of taking him personally. When he learned that his son, Pharnaces, had led a revolt against him, Mithridates admitted defeat and gathered his two daughters to his side to administer fatal poison. The women died swiftly but Mithridates, who had been regularly taking small doses of poison throughout his life, did not, and he was forced to order Bituitus, an officer of his Gallic guard, to kill him with his sword. Pompey had set out against Aretas and when news from Pharnaces arrived at his camp there was great rejoicing. It seemed as though 'in the person of Mithridates ten thousand enemies had died' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 41). Pompey gave up his own campaign against the Nabataean king and returned to Amisus on the Pontic coast, where a grisly sight awaited him. Pharnaces was keen to demonstrate his loyalty to Rome and had dispatched many gifts, including the dead body of his father, which was unrecognisable, as the embalmers had failed to remove the brain and the level of decay was great. The scars on his body proved it was Mithridates, but Pompey refused to look at his old enemy and sent the body to Sinope. When news of Mithridates' death reached Rome there was tangible relief; he had been their enemy for twenty-five years and Cicero, consul in 63, proposed ten days of thanksgiving to the gods.

Crassus the Censor and the rise of Caesar

Crassus had remained in Rome during Pompey's extraordinary commands and inevitably viewed his rival's growing success with jealousy and apprehension. Although Crassus' personal fortune had far exceeded that of any other Roman, it was apparent that Pompey would return even richer, but also that his military achievements would now eclipse the kudos of mere wealth. Pompey would return with *auctoritas* and, if he was to stay on terms, Crassus would need to develop his own interests and enhance his power in other ways; 'renouncing, therefore, all efforts to equal Pompey in military achievements, he plunged into politics ... and acquired an influence and a repute equal to that which Pompey possessed from his many and great expeditions' (Plutarch, *Crassus* 7).

Crassus' relationship with the political elite was not friendly. He had made a fortune during the proscriptions, had subsequently built a diverse business empire and had forged strong and firm links with the *equites* and other business interests throughout the Empire. His success and wealth attracted the envy of the nobility, who viewed him with suspicion, but Crassus appears to have made few attempts to build bridges. By the 60s he was using his wealth to exert his personal influence on political life. He would lend money interest-free to men he had identified as 'promising' and could be found canvassing for candidates who interested him, funding legal cases, and 'was continually ready with his services, was ever at hand and easy of access, and always took an active part in the enterprises of the hour' (*ibid.*). He had been connected with tribunes such as Sicinius and Macer in the 70s and Manilius in the 60s, and many senators were ready to believe that he had close links with Catiline before and during 63. Crassus became censor in 65 with Catulus, conservative leader of the optimates, as his colleague, a role which gave him considerable influence over the composition of the Senate.

One of Crassus' political protégés during the 60s was Caesar, who had started to make his mark as an independently minded *popularis*, speaking out in favour of the restoration of the tribunes in 70 and both the *lex Gabinia* and *lex Manilia*. He was born in 100 into a patrician family with a proud ancestry but whose political influence and family wealth had declined. His father Gaius Julius Caesar had married Aurelia from the Cotta family of plebeian nobility, three of whose cousins served as consuls, and he had reached the rank of praetor and become governor of Asia. The family had prospered from the marriage in 111 between Julia, Caesar's aunt, and Marius, the great general and seven times consul, who had brought his fortune and also his *popularis* politics. Caesar was an exceptional student who was educated by some of the finest minds in Rome. His young life had already been eventful and his marriage to Cornelia, the daughter of Cinna, almost cost him his life during the proscriptions. He had left Sullan Rome, and Suetonius writes of a

homosexual relationship between Caesar and Nicomedes of Bithynia when Caesar was working for the governor of Asia in 81. The allegations were that Caesar had acted as cupbearer to the old king at a feast and had been taken to the royal bedchamber, where 'he lay on a golden couch arrayed in purple, and that the virginity of this son of Venus was lost in Bithynia' (49). This story gave Caesar's political enemies endless ammunition and haunted him throughout his political career.

Caesar returned to Rome after Sulla's death and worked actively in the courts, enthusiastically but unsuccessfully prosecuting both the proconsul of Macedonia, Dolabella, on a charge of extortion in 77, and Antonius Hybrida for corruption in Greece in 76. It was on the way to Rhodes where Caesar planned to improve his rhetorical skills that he encountered pirates in 75, an episode which revealed his determination and force of character. He was back in Rome by 73, active in the courts again, and was elected one of the twenty-four military tribunes¹ in 73 or 72, and it is possible he served with Crassus during the war against Spartacus. Caesar was thirty years old during the consulate of Pompey and Crassus and, although his career had been colourful and eventful, it had not been exceptional. It was important to take every opportunity for self-advertisement and his interventions in 70, 67 and 66 should be seen in this context.

Caesar was elected quaestor for 69, taking office at the minimum age laid down in the new Sullan system, always a matter of great pride to those elected. He was assigned to Further Spain but, before he left, Caesar delivered the funeral oration for his aunt Julia from the Rostra in the Forum, raising his own profile by linking the ancestry of the Julii directly to the goddess Venus, but also by reminding the crowd of the great victories of Marius, who remained a popular hero in the city. Caesar followed this public funeral and eulogy with another for his young wife Cornelia, a much more unusual event. The marriage would appear to have been happy and produced Caesar's only legitimate child, a daughter, Julia, but his infidelity was well established and he had already had numerous affairs with married women, including the wife of Crassus, Tertulla (Suetonius 50). Caesar had also begun his relationship with Servilia, who would be his mistress for most of his life. She was the half-sister of Marcus Porcius Cato, who became Caesar's sternest enemy, the widow of Marcus Junius Brutus, the supporter of Lepidus executed by Pompey in 77, and the mother of Marcus Junius Brutus, born in 85, who would lead the conspirators who assassinated Caesar in 44. Caesar was ambitious and talented, but so were many others whom Crassus helped along the way. Caesar's affair with Crassus' wife appears to have been no obstacle to their later friendship and Crassus became more closely involved with Caesar during the next stage of his career.

Caesar returned to Rome in 68, became a senator, as the twenty quaestors elected each year were automatically enrolled in the Senate after their year of office, and set his sights on the aedileship, to which he was elected for 65. The

curule aediles were responsible for the maintenance of public buildings and temples and for securing orderly behaviour in the streets and markets. It was expected that these officials would use their own money to fund entertainments to be staged on public holidays. When Caesar was elected to this office he 'threw into the shade all attempts at winning distinction in this way that had been made by previous holders of the office' (Suetonius 5). There were theatrical performances, public banquets, elaborate games, and a lavish and controversial exhibition on the Capitoline of gilded monuments to the victories of Marius displayed alongside precious objects he had looted. Caesar had organised games in memory of his father, who had died twenty years previously, and 'had collected so immense a troop of combatants that his terrified political opponents rushed a Bill through the House limiting the number of gladiators that anyone might keep in Rome; consequently far fewer pairs fought than had been advertised' (Suetonius 10). Plutarch (*Caesar* 5) records that 320 pairs of gladiators in silver armour did fight in single combat, despite this measure. Some of these games were 'at his own expense, some in co-operation with his colleague Marcus Bibulus', but Suetonius (*ibid.*) records that 'Caesar alone took all the credit even for what they spent in common', leaving Bibulus wryly to accept that he was very definitely in his colleague's shadow. Caesar 'was unsparing in his outlays of money' and had borrowed extensively to put on this year of festivities, but it had been worth it. 'He washed away all memory of the ambitious efforts of his predecessors in the office. By these means he put the people in such a humour that every man of them was seeking out new offices and new honours with which to reward him' (Plutarch, *Caesar* 5). Caesar's increasingly close links with Crassus led to the generally held assumption that much of that money must have come from him. Caesar's debts had been covered as part of Crassus' policy of developing the careers of useful protégés but, ever the businessman, there was an expectation of repayment when circumstances allowed, and also of political favours when Caesar's career took off, as Crassus now expected it would.

If his support of Caesar was proving fruitful, Crassus' relationship with Catiline, another of his young protégés, was more problematic. He had been born into a noble family which had produced no consul for 300 years and the young Catiline was determined to restore the family's reputation and fortunes. He had supported Sulla on his return, profited during the proscriptions and in 68 was elected praetor followed by two years as governor of Africa. An embassy from Africa had come to complain about his conduct even before his term of office was over and, on his return, Catiline faced extortion charges. As it was forbidden to stand as a candidate when facing prosecution, this delayed Catiline's plans to stand as consul in 66. Further legal problems prevented his candidature in 65, although Cicero later claimed in his speech, *In toga candida*, delivered during the 64 election, that Catiline was actually rejected by the presiding consul as unsuitable.

Both Sallust and Suetonius suggest that Crassus, Caesar and Catiline were

prepared to take extreme measures to secure power for themselves. The elections of 66 were dogged by intimidation and electoral bribery and the successful consular candidates, Paetus and P. Cornelius Sulla, were subsequently prosecuted by the two losers, Aurelius Cotta, author of the *lex Aurelia Cotta*, and Torquatus. The consuls were found guilty, disqualified and lost their seats in the Senate, the first victims of a law passed in 67 to tighten up on electoral bribery. Catiline had been unable to stand, and Sallust (18) reports that he combined with the two disgraced candidates and an impoverished young noble called Calpurnius Piso to murder the incoming consuls of 65 and several other senators and seize the top jobs in the state. Nothing materialised and the plot, if it ever existed, dissipated. It may have been an invention of writers such as Sallust to add even more spice to Catiline's scurrilous reputation, although Suetonius (9) alleged that there was a plot and that the masterminds were Crassus and Caesar, who wanted to be dictator and Master of the Horse. These shadowy events have come to be known as the First Catilinarian Conspiracy, but there is no contemporary evidence for it. Common sense would suggest that there was little likelihood of Crassus, censor for 65, and Caesar, about to embark on his aedileship, being involved in such a risky scheme, and Suetonius conceded that the sources available were universally hostile to the pair.

As news of Pompey's successes reached Rome, Crassus used his position as censor to embark upon a variety of schemes by which he attempted to undermine and compromise Pompey in order to make his return as uncomfortable as possible. As Pompey's army marched through the lands of the Eastern Mediterranean his growing number of clients became a source of great concern to Crassus. The race was on to compete, and Crassus used his influence to secure the appointment of Calpurnius Piso as governor of Nearer Spain. Pompey had considerable influence among the Spanish since his campaign against Sertorius and this was an attempt to win them over to Crassus. Unfortunately Piso was murdered by native cavalry shortly after his arrival. Crassus next proposed full citizenship for the Transpadane Gauls, who had been granted Latin status by Pompey's father. The area was within Cisalpine Gaul, but the grants of citizenship that ended the Social War had not extended so far north, which was a serious bone of contention. Caesar had visited Transpadane Gaul during his journey back from Spain and may have discussed the matter with Crassus. The area was a valuable recruiting ground and the gratitude of the Gauls would have greatly increased Crassus' influence in the province at the expense of Pompey. Unfortunately Crassus faced the stubborn and formidable opposition of his fellow censor, Catulus. The optimates were already troubled by the increased number of citizens since the Social War because they were no longer able to control the assemblies as effectively as before; they did not want any more. Catulus prevailed and the plan was withdrawn.

Crassus next turned his attention to Egypt, a potentially valuable prize for

Rome, and currently very unstable. Ptolemy XI, known as Auletes, the flute player, was an illegitimate son of Ptolemy X, who had been murdered by his people. Crassus' opportunity for intervention came when a will was circulated which purported to be that of Ptolemy X by which he bequeathed his kingdom to Rome. Crassus proposed that Egypt should be annexed and suggested that Caesar, an aedile in 65, should supervise the process. The abundance of Egypt's corn supply and the wealth of the country made it an attractive proposition, and Crassus would have gained an enormous number of clients if he had masterminded the annexation, but there were rumours that he was attempting to establish Egypt as a rival military base to attack Pompey. Ward argues (1977: 33) this is most unlikely, concluding that a war would have certainly resulted in a defeat for Crassus, and, 'since the Optimate-dominated Senate was a common enemy to his and Pompey's personal ambitions, he probably considered an equal alliance with Pompey to be the most practical course at the time'. Cicero spoke out against an Egyptian campaign in *De Rege Alexandrino*, which could have been an attempt to draw closer to Pompey or possibly an attempt to collude with optimate opposition to the plan. Marshall concludes (1976: 67), 'Cicero was fortunate, for he could gain a double benefit: by opposing the proposal he stood to gain favour with both Pompeius and the conservative senators'. Only fragments of the speech remain, but they indicate clearly that Cicero attacked not only the proposals but also the involvement and motives of Crassus. Although Cicero is sometimes credited with stopping Crassus, again it was opposition from Catulus and the optimates which knocked his plan on the head. Political stalemate ensued, the two men found it impossible to work together, and both censors decided that resignation was their only option; they had failed to co-operate sufficiently even to carry out the census for which they had been elected. According to Plutarch, 'his censorship passed without any results or achievements whatever' (*Crassus* 13).

Crassus had failed to increase the number of his clients or extend his political influence into Spain, Cisalpine Gaul or Egypt. As the return of Pompey drew ever closer, it is possible Crassus turned his attention to the issue of the land required to reward Pompey's veterans, hoping to find a way to complicate the system and thus embarrass Pompey. At the end of 64 a tribune, Rullus, put forward the proposal that a ten-man commission with five years of propraetorian *imperium* be appointed to distribute the last remaining public land in Italy to the poor. It was also to have the power to establish colonies within Italy and the provinces and to use public funds, provincial taxes and war booty for the purchase of any additional land required; any land acquired by the state since 88 could be sold to fund the scheme. Cicero attacked the Bill in 64 and 63 and our information about it comes largely through his speeches. Cicero argued that land acquired through Pompey's conquests would have to be sold according to the terms of the Bill, which was inimical to Pompey's interests. He railed against the immense power of the

commissioners, who would be able to exploit their position and line their own pockets, and suggested that the Pompeian veterans would be unsure whether Pompey or the state had provided their post-war land. Cicero saw the hand of Crassus behind the Bill, attempting to create problems for Pompey on his return, particularly as the Bill stipulated that members of the commission must stand in person for election, which would have excluded the absent Pompey. But Rullus had been the commander of Pompey's Black Sea fleet during 65 and it would seem most unlikely that he would promote a law that would damage his general's interests. It is possible that Cicero identified the true author incorrectly. The Rullan Bill has always attracted controversy. It has been argued by Shotter (1994: 58) that the Bill may well 'have been the brainchild of Pompey', as his veterans were going to benefit and he may have been attempting to facilitate the process; his irritation with Cicero when it was dropped can only be imagined if such was the case. Lintott (2008: 140) argues that the traditional view of this Bill as an attempt 'to undermine Pompey's power and influence is little favoured now', and comments that some of the tribunes involved were supporters of Pompey. He suggests the Bill 'was probably a compromise between a number of different interests, as one might have expected from a Bill supported by the whole tribunician college'. If the Rullan Bill was Crassus' attempt to gain control of the public land of Italy and, as one of ten commissioners, *decemviri*, dispose of it by the allocation of plots and the establishment of colonies to make difficulties for Pompey on his return, this policy was also a failure, as Rullus would withdraw the Bill early in 63.

Crassus' own personal wealth remained substantial but his plans to increase his influence and clients had all failed and his protégé Catiline was becoming difficult to manage. Caesar had proved to be a much more promising choice and he scored a great success during the elections for the new *pontifex maximus* following the death of Metellus Pius in late 64 or early 63. This was a prestigious and influential job for life which normally went to a senior senator at the end of a long and distinguished career, but Caesar, who was intending to stand as praetor in the 63 elections, was only thirty-seven years old. He clearly appreciated that he was taking a great risk, and had borrowed so heavily that failure would have ended his career. Plutarch records a remark Caesar made to his mother on the morning of the election: 'Today, Mother, you will either see your son as high priest or as an exile' (Plutarch, *Caesar* 7). It was close, but Caesar came out on top, beating his two rivals, Servilius Isauricus, consul in 79, and Catulus, who had, 'tried to bribe him with a large sum of money to stand down' (*ibid.*). Caesar's election brought him a house within the Forum itself and significantly enhanced status and influence in senatorial decision making. His victory over Catulus, who had opposed so many of his own recent schemes, must have delighted Crassus. Although Caesar's aedileship had made him a popular favourite and must have secured him many votes from the electorate, Suetonius believed he 'used the most

flagrant bribery to secure it' (13). As the deepest purse in Rome belonged to Crassus, the failed candidates, the Senate and the people drew their own conclusions.

Another young Roman starting to make his mark on Roman politics during these years was Marcus Porcius Cato, who would exert enormous influence as optimate leader in the 50s. He was the great-grandson of Cato the Censor, who had dominated Rome during the Second Punic War. Cato had been drawn to the Greek philosophy of Stoicism in his youth and its principles and their application to his political life marked him out from his contemporaries. Sallust (54) was extremely complimentary about his qualities, writing that Cato 'was more concerned to be a good man than to be thought one'. His personal life was austere, apart from his alleged drinking habits, and he acquired a formidable reputation for integrity and incorruptibility, which usually manifested itself in criticism of anyone or anything he felt harmful to the Republic, to which he was utterly committed. Cato's firmly held convictions verged upon bigotry, and his inability to compromise led him into obstinate and resolute behaviour which eventually proved perilous. Although his obduracy greatly frustrated Cicero at times, he acknowledged that Cato was sincere and committed in his beliefs, and wrote to Atticus (5.1) that 'Cato was worth a hundred thousand men'.

In 64 Cato became quaestor and was assigned to the Treasury, where he applied himself with a forensic probity and vigour that made him extremely unpopular with the staff. During his investigations of the state accounts Cato decided to pursue those who had killed victims on Sulla's proscription lists. Nearly twenty years had passed and the payments they had received were now seen as blood money. Cato's actions resulted in a flurry of murder prosecutions, including that of Catiline. As a former aedile, Julius Caesar was drafted in to preside over one of the murder courts because the volume of business was more than the praetors could handle. Catiline's case was heard before Caesar and, despite the evidence against him, he was acquitted. Whether this was because of Caesar's collusion is not clear but, as both Caesar and Catiline were friendly with Crassus, this trial would later help to fuel the rumours that both men were involved in his later conspiracy.

Storming the citadel

Since the successful prosecution of Verres in 70, Cicero had been the leading lawyer in Rome. He had outclassed and outmanoeuvred Hortensius, who had withdrawn from the case and, although he was consul in 69, Hortensius did not recover his reputation in the courts for several years. Cicero's own energies were now focused on scaling the political ladder and achieving the ultimate prize of the consulship. In 69 Cicero became aedile and staged the festivals of the year to great public acclaim, largely because of a constant supply of food from the grateful Sicilians. The popularity that flowed from the Verres case and his aedileship made Cicero a household name. He now concentrated on defence trials; ironically his conscience was completely clear when he undertook the case of Marcus Fonteius, governor of Transalpine Gaul, who was facing charges of corruption, arguing that his responsibility was to the client even if the case 'does not exactly correspond to the truth' (Off. 2.51). Cicero mounted a robust defence and cast doubt on the credibility of the witnesses from Gaul who gave evidence against his client; it was his job.

Roman lawyers received no fixed payment for their services in the courts. Successfully defended clients were placed under an obligation, or *officium*, to their lawyer who was known as *patronus*, and were expected to show gratitude when required; this was *do ut des*, 'I give in order that you may give back', in action. The obligation to exercise *gratia*, influence or pull, could involve a gift of money such as a loan to cover election expenses but could equally be in the form of pressure exerted to secure the vote of a century, to arrange a vote in the Senate, organise a job in the provinces or merely to offer a public show of support. The richer a client was, the more potent the *gratia* he could exercise. This system of *manus manum lavat*, each hand washes the other, was very advantageous to an aspiring politician such as Cicero. Many clients also named Cicero in their wills and it has been estimated that he had received around 20 million sesterces in legacies by the end of his life; a very substantial sum. Cicero's wife Terentia had come with a handsome dowry, and he had inherited some land and property from his father on his death, but his income and worth were considerably less than that available to most aspiring magistrates through their family connections.

As a new man Cicero had inherited no political influence, and this placed him at a great disadvantage, as the pressure the senatorial nobility could exert upon the electorate was powerful. Sallust succinctly describes the problems facing Marius, also a *novus homo*, when he was considering standing for the consulship during the Jugurthine War.

At that time, although the citizens of low birth had access to other

magistracies, the consulship was still reserved by custom to noblemen, who contrived to pass it on from one to another of their number. A self-made man, however distinguished he might be or however admirable his achievements, was invariably considered unworthy of that honour, almost as if he was unclean.

(Sallust, *Jugurthine War* 63)

This was a barrier Cicero recognised and had spent his life and career preparing to surmount. He had built up considerable support among the *equites*, championing many of them in the courts, and had forged links with many important senators, but he was still regarded as an irritating upstart by many among the ruling elite. Cicero had trodden a careful path, avoiding controversial political issues and attempting to broaden his appeal across all the main political groups. He had neither the money nor the inclination to participate in the widespread bribery which accompanied most elections. It was considered acceptable to supply members of your tribe with theatre tickets and banquets; the use of cash incentives to secure votes was becoming the norm. The senatorial expulsions of 70 and enrolment of so many new Italian voters had increased competition and corruption in elections, as had been seen so clearly in 66. The industry of electoral bribery had grown to such an extent that many *divisores*, agents who distributed cash to voters, now had their offices on the Campus Martius where voting took place.

Cicero was a politician in a different mould. He had his good reputation, his high profile in the courts, his industry and his growing popularity among the people. These were his political weapons, and in 66, at the age of forty, Cicero took office as praetor. He had confidently expected to be elected, writing to Atticus (1.10) that there was no need for his friend to come to Rome and help him in his campaign, and he has returned top of the poll, ahead of some impressive opponents such as Galba, a leading patrician, and Cassius Longinus, a well respected plebeian noble. The senior magistrates were elected in the *comitia centuriata*, and Cicero's easy success suggests that he had built up significant support among the nobility, whose power in the *comitia* remained very strong in the 60s. Other *novi homines* had reached the office of praetor but the odds on reaching the praetorship in the post-Sullan Senate were only two in five (Mitchell 1991: 152). Cicero's success in the Verres case and his refusal to be drawn into the debate about the *lex Gabinia* had both improved his standing among many senators, and his speech on the *lex Manilia* had impressed others. Cicero served as president of the extortion court during his year as praetor but also continued his legal practice alongside his official duties, specialising in cases of corruption in government, *crimen repetundarum*, and in elections, *ambitus*. One of the cases that came before him as judge involved Licinius Macer, the troublesome tribune of 73. He had been accused of corruption but had assumed he would be acquitted because he was supported by Crassus. Cicero directed the jury scrupulously and they

unanimously found him guilty, which, allegedly, caused Macer to throw himself on his bed and die (Plutarch, *Cicero* 9).

Cicero became embroiled in a much more significant case in December 66 involving Manilius, a close ally of Pompey and the author of the *lex Manilia*. He had been accused of embezzling money during his tribunate, but the sources and the popular support he received at the time make it clear that this was probably an attempt by the optimates to get their own back. When he was tribune Manilius had put forward a Bill to give freedmen the right to vote in the same tribes as those who had given them their freedom and, expecting opposition, had assembled a personal gang of freedmen and slaves. This proposal was completely unacceptable to many optimates, including several important senators with whom Cicero had forged important links such as Lucius Domitius Ahenobarbus, an extremely rich politician from the highest echelons of the ruling elite. Cicero initially granted Manilius only one day to prepare his case when it was normal to allow at least ten. This action was interpreted as hostile to Manilius, and the tribunes brought Cicero before a *contio*. Cicero explained that he had hoped to try the case himself but had only one day of his praetorship left; speed was of the essence (Plutarch, *Cicero* 9). This excuse appears to have been accepted, although both Dio (36.42) and Plutarch (*ibid.*) state that Manilius had asked for extra time, which he would not have done if he felt he could count on Cicero's support. Cicero was now in a difficult position. Manilius had Pompey's support, and Cicero did not wish to alienate him, but nor did he wish to anger his noble friends and lose their goodwill. It was a painful decision but Cicero reluctantly agreed to defend Manilius himself. The trial was scheduled for 65, but when Manilius failed to appear in person he was condemned and Cicero did not have to speak on his behalf. It was a lucky escape.

By 65 Cicero's plans to stand as consul were dominating his thoughts. He did not take a province as would have been customary for a retiring praetor but remained in Rome. He declined the offer of a position abroad with Gaius Calpurnius Piso, consul in 67, another important optimate supporter: he had no desire to leave the city. Cicero wrote to Atticus (1.1) shortly before 17 July 65, just after the consular elections, about his own prospects and problems as a candidate, one of only eleven surviving letters that predate his consulship. He analyses the likely opposition candidates and picks out Catiline for particular mention. Cicero and Catiline's paths had briefly crossed during the Social War when they had both served with Pompey's father. Catiline was facing prosecution for extortion for his actions as governor of Africa, and Cicero knew he was guilty, joking, 'If Catiline's jury finds that the sun does not shine at midday, he will certainly be a candidate'. Clearly Cicero's main concern was the attitude of the *nobiles* to his candidature, and he wrote another brief letter to Atticus shortly afterwards (1.2) which gives us an insight into the lengths he was prepared to go to secure support: 'I am proposing to defend my fellow candidate Catiline. We have the jury we want,

with full co-operation from the prosecution.’ Cicero was prepared to defend a man he believed to be guilty because ‘If he is acquitted I hope he will be more inclined to work with me in the campaign’. Later, in the *Pro Caelio* (14), Cicero would claim that he had been deceived by Catiline, who had ‘seemed to me a good citizen’, but this was a very convenient excuse: Cicero did defend men he knew to be guilty. The proposed defence did not take place, even though Cicero may have thought the case easily won. Catiline had several eminent character witnesses, including Catulus and one of the consuls, Torquatus, and the prosecutor, Clodius, does not seem to have pursued the case and jury selection with great zeal. If Catiline had already started to work with Crassus and Caesar he possibly felt no need of Cicero’s help, but the existence of such an alliance could also have deterred Cicero. The mere possibility of such a defence evidences Cicero’s own political ambitions and the opposition he expected his candidature to face. His second letter (*ibid.*) contains a personal appeal to Atticus for help: ‘I need you home pretty soon. There is a decidedly strong belief abroad that your noble friends are going to oppose my election. Clearly you would be invaluable to me in winning them over.’

Cicero had told Atticus (1.1), ‘I shall spare no pains in faithfully fulfilling the whole duty of a candidate,’ and this he certainly did: every action, every word was now directed towards securing the consulship of 63. The *Handbook on Electioneering* is an interesting document, allegedly written by Quintus Cicero to his brother, which contains advice on how a *novus homo* can win a consular election. As Quintus was younger than Marcus, and much less experienced in politics, it seems unlikely that he was the author, and it has been suggested the *Handbook* could be an exercise written by a student in a rhetorical school under the Principate. Whoever its author was, he knew about late Republican politics, and the *Handbook* is extremely useful in outlining the nuts and bolts of electioneering. It contains no lofty election programme to convince voters that Cicero would bring something new to the role of consul. The thrust of the writing is practical; it is all about how to win the most votes and it explains how a *novus homo* can do this by hard work and without the use of bribery.

Whether or not Cicero used the *Handbook*, it is unlikely that he would have done anything different to secure a victory over his fellow candidates. He had made a lifetime study of Roman politics and the letters of 65 demonstrate that Cicero had already been considering his campaign tactics. He appreciated fully that it was a handicap to be a *novus homo* and the work required to rise above this without adequate funds to oil the electoral wheels was both rigorous and time-consuming. Cicero had many advantages already, particularly his oratorical skills and high profile in the courts, and the opponents he was facing are portrayed as either feeble or corrupt. Even allowing for bias in the source, the men do not emerge as a vintage crop of candidates. Galba and Cassius Longinus, who would later join Catiline, were

both of noble birth but are dismissed in the *Handbook* (7) as ‘without vigour and ability’. Antonius Hybrida, who campaigned with Catiline, had been expelled from the Senate by the censors of 70 but had re-entered the political fray during the 60s, and the *Handbook* calls him ‘wanton’ and ‘impecunious’ (8) and ‘afraid of his own shadow’ (9). His running mate Catiline is portrayed as a much more dangerous enemy, perpetrator of evil crimes and, ‘criminal schemes’ (10).

The key to electoral success for a new man such as Cicero, according to the *Handbook*, was to build up a network of *amici*, friends who could be called upon for visible and tangible support. This was to be an intensive process: all connections must be exploited and all favours must be called in, as it was necessary, ‘to have *amici* of all kinds’ (18). They must come from all ranks of society, ‘men who are distinguished in rank and title’, the magistrates, the leaders of *collegia*, legal clients, the equestrian order both in Rome and elsewhere in Italy, but ‘neighbours, clients, freedmen and even your slaves’ (17) also must be mobilised and paraded, as ‘a large daily gathering escorting you to the Forum is a source of great esteem and honour’ (36). Cicero was to offer each ‘a favour, a hope, and spontaneous goodwill’ (21), and in this way he would form *amicitiae*, political friendships, which would secure his election as consul. For Cicero politics was a personal matter. He knew men individually, applied the persistence recommended in the *Handbook*, and behaved with a politeness which could verge on sycophancy. His popularity with the people was assured because of his public appearances in the courts and his links with Pompey made him even more attractive to ordinary citizens.

The *Handbook* suggested that Cicero should ‘see that your competitors are smeared with an evil reputation’ (40), and his speech, *In Toga Candida*, appears to have done just that. The speech, only fragments of which survive, was probably delivered shortly before election day and published immediately after, and is the second speech Cicero is known to have delivered to the Senate. *In Toga Candida* is preserved only through the commentary of Asconius, but it can be concluded that he stridently attacked his fellow candidates Catiline and Antonius for their use of bribery, which he portrayed as an insult to the Senate, and he also blackened their characters, particularly Catiline’s. Cicero had a lot of ammunition. Catiline had participated brutally in the proscriptions and in 73 was tried but not convicted for having sex with a Vestal Virgin, Fabia, Cicero’s sister-in-law. He had been an overtly corrupt governor of Africa, and brought to trial *de repetundis*. Unable to stand in the consulship elections of both 66 and 65 for legal reasons, Catiline’s possible involvement in the so-called First Catilinarian Conspiracy has already been discussed, and there were rumours he had killed his own son to marry his wealthy wife Aurelia Orestilla. Cicero’s frontal assault on Catiline’s character *In Toga Candida* can have done little to mitigate his scandalous reputation. By contrast Cicero presented himself as a safe pair of hands, with the interests

of the Republic at heart. Lintott (2008: 132) concludes, 'The reader of this little treatise comes away with the impression that Cicero's campaign is well informed, streetwise, and only as scrupulous as it needs to be'.

Cicero was elected top of the poll, with Antonius as his colleague. Catiline had lost to Cicero, 'the only one of the candidates who was the son, not of a senator, but of a knight' (Plutarch, *Cicero* 11); he was a volatile snob and it was a bitter pill to swallow. Plutarch (*Cicero* 10) records that Cicero had attracted a significant amount of support from the nobles, who had 'put aside their prejudices against the *novus homo* and recognised that, with Pompey absent from Italy, a strong leader was needed'. The prospect of Catiline and Antonius working together was seen as dangerous: 'Most of the better class of citizens were aware of this, and therefore put forward Cicero for the consulship, and as the people readily accepted him' (*Cicero* 11). An examination of a few of Cicero's most important *amici* in the 60s, however, would suggest the support he received was not as unexpected as Plutarch would have us believe. Cicero's links with Ahenobarbus have already been mentioned. It was an important connection, as he was the brother-in-law of Cato who, in turn, had a half-sister married to Lucullus, and a half-brother married to the daughter of Hortensius. Cicero had worked closely during the trial of Verres with Lentulus Marcellinus, who had strong political ties with the Corneli Lentuli, who were also closely linked with the Claudii Marcelli. These were some of the most powerful members of the ruling elite and they had supported Cicero before the threat of Catiline emerged.

Cicero chose to paint his own picture of his achievements in *De lege agraria* (2.3), his first public speech after the election. He claimed that diligent electioneering had brought him to this point and failed to acknowledge the noble support he had received. He proclaimed, 'I am the only one of all the new men we can remember who both stood for office at the minimum age and was elected at the first attempt', adding that his success was not due to 'the support of a group of powerful men nor to the far-reaching influence of a small minority, but to the will of the entire Roman people' (2.7). Cicero claimed the voters had 'stormed the citadel which the nobility had fortified so carefully' and which was now open to 'the claims of merit'. His stream of self-congratulatory rhetoric concluded with the wish to be thought of as the 'people's consul' and, prophetically as it turned out, he reflected, 'if I make a mistake, I cannot hope for a pardon' (5).

Note

- 1 The twenty-four military tribunes differed from the ten elected tribunes of the plebs. Six tribunes were attached to each legion and, although also elected, their function was solely military.

CICERO, 'THE PEOPLE'S CONSUL', 63

‘Keeping Rome safe and sound’: the Catilinarian Conspiracy

When Cicero delivered *De Lege Agraria* he made it clear that he wished not only to be ‘the people’s consul’ but also to ensure ‘peace abroad, freedom, the proudest right of every Roman, stability at home and all else that is so precious and so dear to the hearts of every one of you’ (10). He assured his audience they had elected ‘a man of vigilance, courage, perseverance and devotion’ (100); the dramatic events of 63 gave him every opportunity to demonstrate those qualities.

Cicero took office on 1 January with Antonius Hybrida, Catiline’s running mate, as his consular colleague. There were rumours ‘that Antonius knew about the conspiracy of Catiline and was not averse to it, owing to the magnitude of his debts’ (Plutarch, *Cicero* 12), but any such inclinations were immediately headed off by Cicero, who had been assigned the lucrative Macedonia as his proconsular province. He offered it to his colleague, and ‘by this favour he induced Antonius, like a hired actor, to play the second rôle to him in defence of their country’ (*ibid.*). Antonius severed his relationship with Catiline, swapped a risk for a certainty, and took a back seat for the year.

At the beginning of the year Cicero was involved in a variety of issues, the first of which was an unusual legal case. Labienus, a tribune with close links to Caesar, prosecuted an elderly senator, Rabirius, for treason. His specific crime was to have been part of the group that had murdered the fiery tribune Saturninus in 100 when an SCU was in force. The legal procedure being used was archaic, *perduellio*, for which the punishment was crucifixion. Caesar was one of the judges and Rabirius was found guilty. Both Hortensius and Cicero spoke on his behalf on appeal and the whole bizarre episode was halted when another archaic procedure of lowering a flag on the Janiculan Hill was invoked and business was ended. The *populares* had become increasingly concerned about the use of the SCU, the Senate’s ultimate decree, invoked in emergencies. In episodes such as the death of Saturninus its scope had been sufficient not only to override the right of a Roman citizen to a trial but also to protect those responsible for his death. Rabirius’ trial must be seen as a warning shot from the *populares* that they were no longer prepared to accept the unlimited scope of an SCU.

The proposed Rullan Bill was still under consideration and Antonius hoped to become one of the ten commissioners. Plutarch (*ibid.*) records that Cicero took a strong line and ‘induced the tribunes to desist from the rest of their measures, so overpowered were they by his eloquence’. Public assets would have been privatised to distribute the land involved, and Cicero raised the potential military threat to the Republic of so many soldiers in Italy. He also suggested the Bill was not completely transparent, and that many would

benefit unfairly from its provisions. Plutarch also mentions pressure at this time from the sons of the proscribed, who were demanding full restoration of their rights, but comments that, given the Catilinarian undercurrents, they were ‘disturbing the government at an improper and unseasonable time’ and their demands got nowhere. It had been customary for the *equites* to sit among the ordinary people of Rome in the theatre, but a law passed by Otho when he was tribune in 67 had demarcated an area of reserved seats. ‘The people took this as a mark of dishonour to themselves.’ At a performance attended by Otho they had shown their anger, and ‘disorder reigned in the theatre’ (*Cicero* 13). Cicero summoned everyone involved to the Temple of Bellona, where he publicly dressed them down and ordered them to return to the theatre and behave. Their immediate obedience shows the respect in which the new consul was held.

The greatest threat to stability in 63 was the severe economic dislocation which affected Rome but was particularly acute in the countryside of Italy. The Social War, the civil war between the Marians and Sullans and the revolts of Lepidus and Spartacus had all devastated rural communities in Italy. Farms had been trampled over, produce requisitioned and the situation complicated further by the displacement of peasants in areas such as Etruria, Cisalpine Gaul, Umbria, Campania, Apulia and Bruttium. Etrurian peasants had suffered particularly because so many had lost their land to make way for the returning Sullan veterans. Life had always been tough for Italian farmers, and these were the areas from which the Roman army had traditionally drawn the majority of its recruits. Some peasants had drifted to Rome, others had become labourers on their own land for new masters, while others had borrowed to re-establish their farms, only to find that a bad harvest could devastate them again and require additional borrowing. Depletion of the soil and the widespread use of slave labour also contributed to their problems and made smaller farms increasingly uncompetitive. As the prescribed penalty for reneging on debts was slavery, many were now desperate. After fifteen years as farmers many of Sulla’s veterans also had severe economic problems. Military ability was no guarantee of agricultural success, particularly on poor-quality land, and many had failed to make a living; both Sallust (28) and Cicero (*In Cat.* 2.20) refer to them as key supporters of Catiline. Sallust (33) records a letter, allegedly from Manlius, a Sullan centurion and the leader of Catiline’s army in Etruria, which he hoped would be read to the Senate. It emphasises the economic plight of those who had taken up arms in Etruria, who were ‘poor needy wretches; the cruel harshness of moneylenders has robbed most of us of our homes and all have lost reputation and fortune’. Manlius laments the failure of the Senate to act but insists that their objective is ‘freedom’ and certainly not ‘dominion and riches’.

The war against Mithridates was close to its conclusion, and the hope of great financial benefits lay within reach, but it had dislocated trade, considerably reduced taxation income to Rome and created a cash-flow crisis.

Lenders had started to call in their debts as the prospect of lucrative investments in the new Eastern provinces presented themselves. Credit was in very short supply and interest rates had become prohibitive. It was not just a problem for the poorest members of society; the issue of debt stretched from top to bottom. The rich found themselves financially embarrassed thanks to their excessive spending, but also because of the increasing costs involved in pursuing a political career in Rome. The provision of lavish hospitality and financial inducements during elections had become the norm, and many leading families had become land-rich but cash-poor, living on credit but reluctant to sell property, as it could bring them below the property qualification level required for membership of the Senate. Even if they had wanted to sell, the property market was depressed and there were few buyers in the market. Others had merely squandered their wealth and had accumulated large debts. There was a high level of unemployment within Rome, exacerbated by a slowdown in spending, and problems arising from wealth inequality caused resentment and discontent in the city. Most of the plebs existed from casual job to casual job, paying high rents for overcrowded, poorly built accommodation, and the job market had become even more competitive because of the influx of labourers from the countryside.

The appalling state of the economy, the scale of wealth inequality and perilously precipitous levels of debt were not matters the Senate felt obliged to tackle. Unusually the tribunes of 63 were united in their desire to introduce some reform to ease the economic problems, of which the Rullan Bill was merely one element. Cicero believed reform would destabilise the state, as he considered poverty to be the problem of the individual and looked to the traditional methods of patronage and paternalism, the rich caring for the poor, as the best solution. Limited land distribution and the use of grain doles to alleviate immediate suffering were as far as Cicero was prepared to go in acknowledging any state responsibility for the problems. But there was a crisis looming, and Plutarch wrote, 'All Etruria was roused to revolt, as well as most of Cisalpine Gaul. And Rome was most dangerously disposed towards change on account of the irregularity in the distribution of wealth ... and it was in the power of any bold man to overthrow the commonwealth, which was in a diseased condition' (*Cicero* 10).

The 'bold man' of 63 was Catiline, who had gathered around him a group of disreputable senators even before the 64 elections. They were described by Sallust (16) as 'the neediest and most reckless of his acquaintance', the most important of which was Lentulus Sura, who had been consul in 71 but was expelled from the Senate in 70. By 64 he was fully rehabilitated, re-entered the Senate, and became praetor in 63. Cassius Longinus, who had been Cicero's fellow praetor in 66, was another supporter; Cicero called him the barrel of lard, because of his enormous size. Gaius Cornelius Cethegus, described as 'wild and forceful,' by Sallust (23), and Quintus Curius, who had

been expelled from the Senate in 70 for scandalous living and was 'deeply sunk in crime and debauchery' (17), also backed Catiline. Sallust (17) mysteriously refers to 'a number of men of high standing who took a more secret part in the movement', which could suggest the possible involvement of Caesar and Crassus, the latter because he 'would have been glad to see Pompey's supremacy threatened by the rise of another powerful man' (17–18). Other supporters mentioned by name are Statilius, who was one of the *equites*, and Caeparius from Tarracina, a Roman colony. Sallust (23) gives details of a meeting held before the 64 election when an oath was sealed by the drinking of 'bowls of human blood mixed with wine'. Even Sallust accepted that this may well have been an invented story and needed 'better proof than is forthcoming' to substantiate it. Sallust does not report the story recorded by both Dio (37.30) and Plutarch (*Cicero* 10) in which 'he [Catiline] sacrificed a boy and, after administering the oath over his entrails, ate them in company with others'. Catiline's plan was to take over Rome and divide the spoils among the conspirators. According to Sallust (23), his 'frenzy showed no signs of abating' and 'every day he enlarged his plans'; arms were sent to key points within Italy and an army was planned, to be stationed and recruited in Etruria and led by Manlius.

Cicero had penetrated the inner workings of this plot at some point before the 64 elections. Curius had a mistress, Fulvia. He was very short of money and 'sunk over head and ears in infamy and crime' but he 'suddenly began to talk big and offer her the earth' (Sallust 23). When Fulvia discovered what was going on 'she decided that such a serious danger to the state must not be concealed' and took her story to Cicero and to other influential senators. They were 'seething with jealousy' at Cicero's possible election, seeing it as 'adefilement of the consulship for an outsider, however outstanding his merits, to be elected to it', but, according to Sallust (23), they now accepted that, in such an emergency 'jealousy and pride had to take a back seat'. Cicero then approached Curius, who was 'induced to betray Catiline's designs' (26), and this infiltration into the very heart of the conspiracy enabled Cicero to keep one step ahead of the plotters during his consulship and gave him a tremendous advantage.

Catiline prepared to stand as consul again in 63 and the conspirators planned to assassinate Cicero and other leading political figures during the election. Catiline was fighting on a platform of *tabulae novae*, cancellation of debts, and confidently expected to win. He had support from many sections of Roman society and the appeal of a politician who would remove the single biggest economic burden of the day must not be underestimated. According to Plutarch (*Cicero* 12), 'the schemes of Catiline were still to remain concealed from the multitude', and Cicero realised he could not move against him without some proof. Cicero had information, 'but not sufficient for the conviction of a man of reputation and great power like Catiline' (*Cicero* 14). Amid unfavourable omens, Cicero cancelled the election when he learned

there would be an attempt on his life, and summoned Catiline to the Senate to question him about his intentions. Catiline arrogantly replied, 'What dreadful thing am I doing if, when there are two bodies, one lean and wasted but with a head and the other headless but strong and large, I myself become a head for this?' (*ibid.*). This veiled threat must have caused alarm, and Cicero's own conduct of the election, surrounded by a virtual bodyguard of nobles and obviously wearing a breast-plate underneath his toga, 'thus showing them his peril', led to Catiline's second electoral defeat. Common sense had prevailed and 'the people were incensed and rallied about him [Cicero]' (*ibid.*).

On 21 October Crassus came to Cicero with anonymous letters addressed to several leading Roman senators but which had been delivered to him. They proved that Catiline was in the process of organising an armed *coup* in Rome and advised the recipients to leave Rome quietly and quickly. They also gave advance warning of a military rising in Etruria led by Manlius. Plutarch (*Cicero* 15) believed Crassus had brought this information 'seeking to free himself from charges that had been made against him on account of his friendship for Catiline' but it seems unlikely that either Crassus or Caesar would have supported Catiline in 63. His plan for the cancellation of debts would surely have hit Crassus hard, as he was one of the most important moneylenders in Rome. Caesar, now praetor-elect and *pontifex maximus*, was well on his way to greatness and had nothing to gain from such a risky scheme. Logic would suggest that both men had severed links with Catiline but maybe loyalty to his old patron had induced Catiline to warn Crassus of his intentions. It is equally likely, however, that Crassus, as well as Cicero, was aware of the inner workings of the conspiracy and forged these letters to set procedures in train that would deal with Catiline for good; his former protégé was possibly proving too difficult to handle any other way.

Many senators were still reluctant to believe that a fellow member, born into a noble family, could be contemplating any action harmful to the Republic, but Cicero now had something tangible to present. Cicero summoned the Senate at dawn the following day, 22 October, and the letters were read aloud by their addressees; each one indicated clearly that a plot was afoot. The Senate was also informed of troop movements in Etruria. Cicero asked for the SCU to be passed which, in Sallust's words (29), gave the consuls 'the most extensive powers that Roman custom allows it to entrust to magistrates. This decree authorises them to levy troops and conduct war, to apply unlimited force to allies and citizens alike, and to exercise supreme command and jurisdiction both at home and abroad'. With this authority granted, Cicero set to work immediately, sending four armies to potential trouble spots, Fiesole, Apulia, Capua and Picenum. The gladiatorial schools were disbanded, there was to be no repeat of Spartacus' revolt in this volatile situation, and rewards, such as freedom for slaves, were offered for information. Night watches were posted in Rome; possibly at this point there was a skirmish in Etruria, but it came to nothing.

Cicero had been unable to prove a link between Catiline and Manlius but suspicions abounded, so Catiline voluntarily placed himself into the hands of the praetor, Caecilius Metellus Celer, although he does appear to have slipped away and held a secret meeting with his most important supporters at the house of Marcus Laeca in the street of the Scythe-makers. Cicero used the information from this meeting, gleaned from either Fulvia or Curius, in his First Catilinarian Speech, delivered to the Senate on 7 November. Cicero had summoned the senators to meet at the Temple of 'Jupiter the Stayer'. The Senate could meet only on consecrated ground (the Senate House itself had that status), and they often met in temples. This temple had been promised by Romulus to Jupiter in exchange for rallying his troops in battle and giving them courage to stand and fight. The message Cicero was sending about the gravity of a situation was clear, although, on a practical level, it was an easier building to protect than the Senate House. Catiline attended the Senate, 'either as part of his plan of dissimulation, or with the idea of establishing his innocence if any speaker should denounce him' according to Sallust (31). The challenge from Cicero was clear and direct. He reported the details of the meeting, menacingly warning Catiline, 'No single thing you do, nothing you attempt or even contemplate escapes my notice. I hear and see and plainly understand your every move' (*In Cat.* 1.4). The evidence was compelling. Cicero explained that Rome had been divided into sections and that there would be an armed rising involving that most terrifying of weapons in the largely wooden city, fire. Cicero reported on the plans for his own assassination and that of other leading senators and rebuked those in the Senate who had, so far, been much more inclined to believe the disreputable senator with the acceptable pedigree than the *novus homo* from Arpinum: 'Their mildness had fostered Catilina's hopes and their refusal to believe in his growing conspiracy has given it strength' (*In Cat.* 1.12). Their behaviour now, however, was sending out a very different message. Cicero commented (*In Cat.* 1.6) on the physical isolation of Catiline, sitting amid an 'entire area of seats unoccupied and empty', and Plutarch confirms that, 'no senator would sit with him, but all moved away from the bench where he was' (*Cicero* 16).

The tide had now turned for Catiline. The overwhelming invective of Cicero's detailed speech demolished what remained of Catiline's reputation and Cicero challenged him to 'get off to your wicked and traitorous war' (*In Cat.* 1.13). According to Sallust (32), Catiline, ever the master of dissimulation, pleaded his innocence, 'with downcast eyes ... and suppliant tones'. He reminded them of his patrician background, his 'highest hopes', cherished since childhood, of serving the Roman people, and then he insulted Cicero as 'a mere immigrant'. The senators' reaction to this can be inferred, as Catiline then lost his temper, storming off and hurling insults at the Senate itself and threatening them with 'pulling everything down about your ears' (32).

The confrontation in the Senate on 7 November was a turning point in the

conspiracy. Catiline's guilt was clear, the role of Cicero in uncovering his plans was now appreciated, and Catiline left Rome to join Manlius in Etruria. He deputed Lentulus to organise the conspiracy in the city with clear instructions 'to do everything possible to increase the strength of the party, to find an early opportunity of assassinating Cicero, and to make arrangements for massacre, fire-raising and other violent outrages' (33). Before he left Rome and was declared a public enemy, *hostis*, by the Senate, Sallust (36) records a letter from Catiline to Catulus, which was read to the Senate, in which he defended his actions, possibly hoping to recover the goodwill he had lost. Catiline claimed that he was the victim of 'unjust suspicions' and insisted that his business was merely 'the championship of the oppressed'. The language of the letter is not Sallustian, which has led to suggestions that these may have been Catiline's own words, or extremely close to them, but, whether dissimulation or justification, his protests no longer carried weight with his fellow senators.

The economic distress in Rome was acute and many of the *plebs urbana* were very attracted to Catiline's plans. Sallust (36) records that 'the city populace was especially eager to fling themselves into a revolutionary adventure' but gives no explanation of why their support failed to materialise. Cicero would have argued that this was largely due to his Second Catilinarian Speech, delivered to the people in the Forum on 8 November but omitted by both Sallust and Plutarch in their accounts. The speech is a persuasive *tour de force* in which Cicero divulged the details of the plot and examined its nature. In the most famous section (*In Cat.* 2. 18–23), he identified six key groups of Catiline's supporters, each more unpopular than the last, and rallied the people and the gods against such men. The first group he identified were the rich, always unpopular among the plebs, whose 'ambitions and intentions are scandalous'. The second group were debtors who wished to 'seize control of the state' through insurrection; Cicero's claim that this would be done 'amid the ashes of the city and the blood of its citizens' would undoubtedly have struck fear into his audience. The Sullan veterans received special mention as the third group, their crimes compounded because they had 'tainted some of the peasants'. The fourth group were 'a motley and seditious crew', life's losers, the fifth were the criminal element and the sixth were identified as 'Catilina's special treasure, his picked elite, formed from his own beloved cronies and bosom friends'. Catiline's appeal to the younger noblemen, his sporting of a widely copied chinstrap beard, and the wearing of togas so fine they appeared see-through, had all contributed to allegations that he exerted unnatural power over young men. Cicero's speech is bombastic but also subtly persuasive, as he cleverly identified the plotters with the most unpopular groups in society and played upon the fears and prejudices of his listeners. As there was no rising within Rome itself, and the discontented plebs failed to back Catiline, it must be assumed that Cicero's eloquence left the conspirators poorly supported in the city and was an important factor in

controlling a potentially explosive situation.

Plutarch (*Cicero* 18) records in detail the activities of Lentulus, who had been instructed to increase support for the conspiracy. There was certainly nothing ‘trifling or insignificant’ about his plans, as he had decided ‘to kill all the senators and as many of the other citizens as they could, to burn down the city itself, and to spare no one except the children of Pompey’. The night of the Saturnalia, a feast held in December to celebrate the dedication of the Temple of Saturn, had been selected. Fires were to be set and the aqueducts cut to prevent water being brought to put out the flames; it would appear that Cicero’s warnings of ‘incendiarism’ (*In Cat.* 2.19) had been accurate. The city had been divided up among the conspirators, who, according to Plutarch, amounted to just 100 men, a small number to carry out such ambitious plans. Lentulus now had to think of other ways of increasing the level of support. Sallust (42) writes that envoys of the Allobroges from Transalpine Gaul were in Rome complaining about the ‘rapacity of Roman officials’. As Lentulus did not have the support of the urban plebs, he decided to approach the envoys through Publius Umbrenus and Publius Gabinus, other conspirators, to invite them to join the conspiracy. We must assume Catiline himself would not have made this approach, as the Allobroges were not Romans and, as such, were unacceptable to him; his later refusal to enlist slaves into his inadequate army is another such example of his prejudices. Lentulus’ policy was risky and foolhardy as most Gallic tribes were discontented with Roman provincial rule, and their participation would have made the conspiracy much more dangerous and certainly much harder to control and could have encouraged other tribes to join. Sallust (42) describes how the Allobroges weighed up ‘their debts, their love of fighting and the prospect of enrichment if the war was successful’ against ‘the greater resources of the Roman government’. Common sense prevailed and they took their information to their patron in Rome, Quintus Fabius Sanga, who went to Cicero. Cicero advised the Allobroges to ‘feign great interest’ and ‘try to obtain the clearest possible evidence against them’. The Gauls managed to secure three letters, probably sealed wax tablets, containing full details of the plot from Lentulus, Cethegus and Statilius and, in an elaborate and melodramatic ambush on the Mulvian Bridge as they set off for home via Catiline’s camp in Etruria, these sealed letters fell into Cicero’s hands on the night of 2–3 December.

Cicero now had the proof he needed of a plot within Rome itself. On 3 December he led Lentulus by the wrist down from the Palatine Hill just as a statue of Jupiter, damaged by lightning two years earlier, was being hoisted into position on the Capitol with its face looking towards the Forum. The authors of the letters were brought before the hastily summoned Senate gathered in the Temple of Concord and guarded by an armed ring of *equites*. Each man identified his seal, broke open his own letter and read the contents aloud to a shocked Senate. The three men confessed, as did P. Gabinus, who had also been brought to the Senate. Lentulus resigned as praetor and the men

were taken to the homes of leading senators while Cicero contemplated his next course of action. After a few hours he went out into the Forum and made his Third Catilinarian Speech to the Assembly. It was a masterly summary of events and of Cicero's own role in them, but was also an invocation of the Roman gods. Cicero asserted (*In Cat.* 3.8) that 'the entire visible universe and most particularly this city of Rome is governed by the will and power of the gods'. It seemed to his audience as though Cicero had orchestrated the positioning of Jupiter at that particular moment to underline his own collaboration with the gods, the chief of whom was presiding over the events of that day. The final section of Cicero's speech, probably written later, celebrates his own success and is an excellent example of his self-aggrandisement.

Citizens, my deeds shall be perpetuated in your memories. They will be celebrated in the talk of men. They shall wax and wane down the ages, handed on by the written word. I believe the memory of my consulship will live as long as this city survives; which means, I hope, the term of life of both of them will be eternity.

(Cicero, *In Cat.* 3.11)

Two interesting episodes occurred when the Senate met again the following day. A man called Tarquinius made an allegation that he had been sent by Crassus to Catiline with a message to urge him not to give up in the face of recent problems. This implied a direct link between the two men but, according to Sallust (48), although many senators believed his story, no action was taken against Crassus. Many senators owed Crassus money or were afraid to antagonise him at such a dangerous time, and Tarquinius was imprisoned. Crassus allegedly believed that Cicero had fabricated the accusation to warn him off and keep him out of the events that were to follow. After this incident, Catulus, who had been defeated by Caesar in the recent elections for *pontifex maximus*, and Gaius Piso, who had a personal grievance against him, tried to persuade Cicero (Sallust 49) to get someone to 'bear false witness against Caesar'. It is to Cicero's credit that he refused their 'entreaties, cajolery and bribes', but he was unable to prevent the rumour mill, which 'provoked such intense feeling against Caesar' that he was attacked by the equestrian guards on his way out.

Cicero was staying at a friend's house on the night of 4 December while his wife presided over the rites of Bona Dea, the Good Goddess, and he agonised about what course of action to take. Cicero found the idea of executions distasteful because of the 'kindliness of his nature', but nor did he want 'to make an excessive use of his power and to trample ruthlessly upon men who were of the highest birth and had powerful friends in the city' (Plutarch, *Cicero* 19); it is clear he had concerns about his political future. A sign given

to the women during the rituals gave Cicero the answer he had been looking for, and he decided to hold a debate in the Senate on 5 December to produce an immediate decision. Cicero argued that speed was necessary to prevent the conspirators being rescued and a trial would have taken much longer. He was determined to settle affairs himself before the growing cries for the recall of Pompey could be acted upon, and he had only twenty-six more days as consul. It could be argued Cicero did not need a debate and could have used the power of the SCU to carry out executions, but the case of Rabirius earlier in the year must have convinced him that the backing of the Senate would strengthen his own position. Nevertheless, the Senate was not a court and, even if they decided to execute the men, it was undeniable that the fundamental right of a citizen to a trial was being circumvented.

Sallust records the arguments of only three speakers during the crucial debate in the Senate: the consul-elect Silanus, who proposed the men be executed, Caesar, praetor-elect and *pontifex maximus*, who, rather bravely in the light of the previous day's events, argued the men should be kept in prison for life in Italian towns, and Cato, incoming tribune, who argued that the threat to the Republic was so great the men should die immediately. After Silanus made his proposal, Plutarch (*Cicero* 20) writes that 'all the senators acceded to his opinion one after the other', which indicates that there were other speakers as well. Caesar made his proposal, which is recorded in Plutarch (*ibid.* 21) and also summarised by Cicero in his own response. 'The proposal of Caesar was merciful and its author a very able speaker', and he advocated an unprecedented punishment. Custodial sentences were not a feature of the Roman legal system and it would have been normal to send such men into exile, but Caesar argued that the prisoners should suffer life imprisonment, confiscation of their property and no further right of appeal. The senators were clearly irresolute, as they were being asked to condemn fellow senators to death for crimes that had not even been committed, but Caesar urged them to put the interests of the state above their own and appealed for cool heads in a crisis. His proposals must have offered many an acceptable alternative, and Plutarch records that even Silanus changed his mind after hearing Caesar's argument, as did all of Cicero's friends, who believed this proposal would be much better for Cicero, as he would not be required to use the SCU to execute the prisoners. Plutarch also claims (*ibid.* 20) that Cicero had evidence of Caesar's involvement in the plot which he chose to conceal but, given the lack of support for this in other sources, the anti-Caesar bias of Plutarch, and his assertion that 'in his public policy and his hopes he [Caesar] had already entered upon that road by which he changed the Roman state into a monarchy', this information must be treated with caution.

Sensing that the mood of the Senate was changing, and hoping to nip this vacillation in the bud, Cicero now rose to speak. His Fourth Speech is recorded as continuous but was presumably delivered sectionally during

altercatio, the to-and-fro of debate. Plutarch refers to it, but the speech is not mentioned in Sallust's account. Caesar's exposition on life imprisonment had convinced many senators but, speaking with subtlety and skill, Cicero proceeded to undermine both the argument and the man. He reminded the senators of the grave dangers the city was facing and of the unprecedented nature of, and practical difficulties with, Caesar's proposals. He was careful to compliment Caesar himself as a genuine *popularis* who cared for the people, but drew attention to the absence from the debate of many other *popularis* senators, thus suggesting they were at best politically cowardly or at worst involved in the plot. Cicero's words subtly made Caesar guilty by association, and he concluded with a reminder that he, Cicero, was prepared to bear the brunt of whatever measures were necessary to safeguard the Republic.

Cicero's eloquence paved the way for the strong words of Cato, who now rose to speak. He was scathing of Caesar's proposals, arguing that Rome would never be safe while the criminals remained at large. He reminded the senators that 'a plot has been hatched by citizens of the highest rank to set fire to their native city. Gauls, the deadliest foes of everything Roman, have been called to arms. The hostile army and its leader are ready to descend upon us. Are you still hesitating and unable to decide how to treat public enemies taken within your walls?' (Sallust 52). Mercy was not an option for Cato; the punishment was clearly indicated. Sallust portrays the debate as a struggle between the arguments of the two men who would eventually find themselves bitter opponents in the Civil War. His account gives us no indication of any further discussion or debate, although angry words between Caesar and Cato were exchanged, and the latter clearly suggested that Caesar's failure to push for the death penalty was due to his own involvement in the plot. When a letter was delivered to Caesar during the debate Cato accused him of complicity. He demanded to see it, only to discover it was a passionate love letter to Caesar from his own half-sister Servilia; Cato threw it back at Caesar with anger and disdain (Plutarch, *Brutus* 5).

At the end of the debate a large majority of the senators voted in favour of the death penalty and Cicero wasted no time. He led Lentulus, Cethegus, Gabinius, Statilius and Caeparius, who had been intercepted on his way to Apulia, to the city's jail, the Tullianum, a grim building situated in the Forum and manned by slaves, where the five convicted men were strangled in its putrid dungeon chamber. Cicero emerged to announce, 'Vixerunt', 'They have lived'. The legality of these executions has been long disputed. The SCU had been passed in the face of a military threat in October; the men were executed for their intention to cause a rising in Rome in December. The wording of the SCU suggested that it was a flexible power, to be adapted in circumstances deemed dangerous to the security of Rome, but it has been argued that the scope of the SCU merely covered the circumstances in which it was passed and not a situation as it developed. An additional consideration is whether it covered intended acts or merely those perpetrated. Did the SCU

in any circumstances have the power to override the fundamental rights of a Roman citizen, particularly that of a fair trial? Cicero clearly felt uneasy about using the powers of the SCU alone and had called for the additional support of the Senate through their debate and vote before carrying out the death sentence. The Rabirius case had already raised many legal issues, and the unease of the *populares* about the SCU was already a matter of record, but the buck stopped with the man who had used the powers to carry out the punishment, and that was Cicero.

Cicero had felt the need to make a few remarks before the final vote was taken, and these were to cost him dear. He reflected upon the unity shown by the people of Rome during the conspiracy. The gods had been on their side but, equally important, 'all the orders [classes] are united, in heart and spirit and voice, for the preservation of the state' (*In Cat.* 4.7), and 'for the first time in Roman politics we see today a united and unanimous people' (*In Cat.* 4.9). This *concordia ordinum*, harmony of the orders, was very dear to Cicero's heart. He believed that fear of Catiline had swept aside the normal divisions within Roman society and that his own speeches had been integral in this process. 'If this harmony, brought about in my consulship, can survive for ever in the Republic, then we shall never again see the State torn apart by civil war and strife' (*In Cat.* 4.14–15). It was a political philosophy Cicero hoped would long outlive the events of 63 but, with rather disarmingly uncharacteristic modesty, he was realistic enough to know he could not champion it; Pompey was the man for that. Cicero's closing remarks in the debate, however, did little to facilitate this. Swept away in a wave of self-congratulation, Cicero felt the need to compare his own achievements to those of great military leaders such as Scipio Africanus. Pompey was included in Cicero's list of illustrious soldiers, as he had 'swept in glorious success through all lands under the sun' and therefore 'outshines all others'. Cicero went on to suggest that 'my own achievements will rank alongside them' but concluded that he had surpassed them all by ensuring that 'our victorious generals and soldiers may have some home to which they can return' (*In Cat.* 4.21). The rewards now heaped upon Cicero's head were unprecedented. Catulus, the optimate leader, hailed him *parens patriae*, parent of the country, another senator argued he deserved the civic crown, awarded to those who had saved Roman lives, the Senate voted him a *supplicatio*, a public prayer, the first time this had ever been granted to a civilian, and he was hailed the saviour of the Republic by the thronging crowds that escorted him home. Cicero was the man of the hour.

Shortly after the executions, and despite the fact that Catiline was still at large with an army, Cicero was drawn into the defence of Murena, a former legate of Lucullus whose veterans had helped to secure his election as consul for 62. Cicero believed Murena was capable of the strong leadership Rome still required to defeat Catiline but also to meet the challenge of Pompey's imminent return. Unfortunately one of the defeated candidates, a lawyer,

Servius Sulpicius Rufus, decided to prosecute Murena for *ambitus*, electoral corruption, and Cato decided to support his case. Cicero defended Murena and was able to secure his acquittal, basing his defence on the need to have an experienced soldier in charge and arguing that ‘the highest merit resides in those who have won outstanding glory in war’ (*Pro Murena* 24). Given his legal background and own lack of military experience, Cicero appeared to belittle his own abilities as consul by arguing that legal skills came a poor second to military skills, but the speech must be seen in context. Cicero was looking not just to the Catilinarian army but also to the potential and perceived threat of Pompey. It is interesting that he was supported in this defence by Hortensius and Crassus, known enemies of Pompey.

In December Metellus Nepos, who had been serving as one of Pompey’s legates in the East, took office as tribune. With the support of another tribune, Bestia, and Caesar, the praetor-elect, he attacked Cicero for his execution of citizens without a fair trial and blocked Cicero’s right, that of any departing consul, to make a valedictory speech: ‘placing their benches so as to command the rostra, [they] would not suffer or allow him to speak’ (Plutarch, *Cicero* 23). It was agreed that Cicero could take the oath required of all departing consuls, and he pronounced ‘not the usual oath, but one of his own and a new one, swearing that in very truth he had saved his country and maintained her supremacy’. Cicero had been preparing his triumphant speech at length and it was the cruellest of blows. Cato, who was also a tribune, intervened to ensure Cicero was given the recognition he deserved, and ‘they voted him the greatest honours ever conferred and called him the father of his country. For he was the first, as it seems, to receive this title after Cato had given it to him before the people’ (*ibid.*)

The forces of Catiline, ill equipped, depleted by desertions and demoralised by news of events in Rome, fought their final battle at Pistoia in Etruria in January 62. Antonius, who was at the head of the Roman army sent against his old friend, excused himself from the proceedings because of ‘an attack of gout’, and Marcus Petreius ably defeated Catiline’s army. Sallust (59) gives Catiline a stirring and eloquent final speech in which he urges his men to fight for ‘liberty and the future of your county’ and records that every soldier fought bravely to the death, all bearing wounds to the front. So committed were they to their cause and leader, not one attempted to run away.

Cicero had played a decisive role in subverting and eliminating the menace of Catiline by acting fearlessly upon the intelligence he gleaned, effectively using the SCU to secure the defence of Italy, confronting Catiline in November, dissuading the volatile plebs from throwing their weight behind the conspiracy and using the Allobroges to obtain written proof of the plot in Rome. He had also executed the conspirators without a trial. The Senate had voted him unprecedented honours and recognised his achievement and, although the year of the *novus homo* was over, they finally seemed willing to accept him and overlook his origins. Unfortunately Cicero had so relished his

commanding position that he found it difficult to step back into the body of the Senate. He cherished hopes of perpetuating his influence, not through holding office but as an adviser to the political elite. He was a member now of the consulars, a senior statesman, and the naval imagery in his writings attests to his belief he should now help to 'steer the course'. Unfortunately Cicero's own need to remind his contemporaries of his achievements can make one as scathing as the Roman audience he hoped to impress. Plutarch (*Cicero* 24) writes that 'he made himself generally odious, not by any base action, but by continually praising and magnifying himself, which made him hateful to many'. It was impossible to get away from Cicero's boasting: he 'even went so far as to fill his books and writings with these praises of himself; and he made his oratory, which was naturally very pleasant and had the greatest charm, irksome and tedious to his hearers, since this unpleasant practice clung to him like a fatality'. Seneca the Younger (*Dial.* 10.5.1) was still commenting upon this during the reign of Nero when he remarked that Cicero had praised himself, 'non sine causa sed sine fine', not without justice but without end.

Examining the evidence

Our knowledge of the Catilinarian Conspiracy is largely due to the existence of two detailed contemporary sources, the four speeches delivered by Cicero during the course of the conspiracy which were published in 60, and an account of the conspiracy written by Sallust, one of two extant popular historical works that he wrote in retirement between 40 and 35. Plutarch discusses Cicero's role in 63 in his *Life of Cicero* and later historians such as Appian also give us some insights, although they used Cicero and Sallust among other sources for their own accounts.

There are several difficulties in using Cicero's Catilinarian speeches as evidence, the first of which concerns the content. The four speeches were published in 60, three years after their original delivery and after Cicero had faced criticism for his actions in 63. He was keen to remind the Romans of the crucial role he believed he had played; the speeches were published with this purpose in mind, and he refers to the editing that took place before publication (*ad Att.* 2.1). The four speeches are all long because of the way they were prepared for publication; for example, he incorporates heckling such as Catiline's own response when facing Cicero's stinging criticisms in the First Speech. The Fourth Speech was part of a debate to decide the fate of the arrested conspirators and would have taken the form of *altercatio* rather than a lengthy address by Cicero, therefore it must be seen as an amplified summary of Cicero's role and not an exact representation of what happened in the Senate that day. To help assess the accuracy of the content it is useful to know something of Cicero's working practices. He never had a full draft of any speech in front of him but neither did he fully extemporise. He would memorise carefully his introduction and use brief rough notes for the remainder of the speech, much of which he would have also committed to memory, part of his training as a rhetorician. His secretary Tiro, using his own shorthand, no doubt recorded the best of the off-the-cuff comments, and the speeches which emerged for publication were an amalgam of the planned speech, what was said, the reactions to what was said and Cicero's later thoughts.

The self-aggrandising tone of the four speeches can also be off-putting, which presents another area of difficulty in evaluating the role Cicero played. Lintott (2008: 33) reminds us, 'allowance must be made for the orator's preference for persuasiveness over veracity', and *Michael Grant* (Cicero 1969: 11) observes, 'he blows his own trumpet with an unremitting loudness which can scarcely be paralleled'. It is important to remember that Romans did not share the English predilection for self-deprecation. They were proud of their achievements and keen to recount them so that knowledge of their deeds would live on after their deaths. It must be said, however, that even Cicero's contemporaries found these speeches over the top. Their tone can

also seem defensive, and there is no doubt that Cicero was feeling politically isolated and vulnerable when they were published in 60. He firmly believed that his contribution in 63 had been decisive and was determined to remind his fellow Romans that he had kept them 'safe and sound' (*In Cat.* 3.1), consequently the dangers to Rome are possibly overstated and exaggerated. Catiline is presented as a monochrome villain with no redeeming features and there is no mention of his military skill or his eloquent speeches. Cicero stresses the dangers of Catiline's personality and schemes while establishing his own heroism in defeating such a threat, thus combining his condemnation of Catiline with a strong dose of self-adulation (Wilkins 1994: 29).

The Catilinarian Conspiracy by Sallust, the other major contemporary source for the events of 63, presents us with different but equally challenging problems of interpretation. Sallust was twenty-three years old during the Catilinarian Conspiracy but there is no evidence to suggest he was in the city at the time the events unfolded; his style suggests no personal involvement. When Sallust was a tribune in 52 he vigorously opposed Milo when Cicero was defending him in court and was expelled from the Senate by Appius Claudius in 50 for alleged immorality. His *popularis* links with Caesar enabled Sallust to re-enter politics shortly after and he became quaestor in 48, praetor in 46 and, after serving without any great distinction in the Civil War, was appointed governor of Numidia¹ with proconsular rank. Sallust avoided prosecution for irregularities during his term of office only because of the personal intervention of Caesar, who took a share of his profits. These must have been considerable, as plentiful funds remained to pay for an opulent villa and to landscape the Horti Sallustiani, impressive gardens at the foot of the Quirinal Hill which later belonged to the Roman emperors. Retiring from public life after Caesar's death, Sallust spent his remaining years writing his histories.

Rather than writing the story of the conspiracy in the style of an annalist, Sallust wrote a monograph, focusing on one individual, an accepted but uncommon genre at the time, which enabled him to discuss the character of Catiline fully and to examine the political and social issues in terms of Catiline himself. In the Preface Sallust (5) describes the conspiracy as 'a criminal enterprise which I consider particularly memorable as being unprecedented in itself and fraught with unprecedented dangers to Rome'. Such a challenge requires a larger-than-life villain, and the Catiline presented by Sallust is such a man, with 'a vicious and depraved nature ... flaming passions ... an overmastering desire for despotic power'. Catiline is portrayed as morally bankrupt, a charismatic figure of evil, attractive to men and women alike, and with a particularly sinister appeal to the young. This is not unlike the picture drawn by Cicero, but there are also passages in Sallust's account where Catiline appears noble. A good example of this is his address to his troops before the final battle of January 62 (58) in which Catiline exhorts them in the face of insurmountable opposition to 'be brave and resolute, and

when you go into battle to remember that riches, honour, glory and, what is more, your liberty and the future of your country, lie in your right hands'. Wilkins has argued convincingly that Sallust deliberately presents a more rounded individual. By demonstrating how traditional Roman virtues had been undermined, Sallust seeks to explain how Catiline was himself a victim of the corrupt society in which he lived.

In the Preface Sallust outlines his own interpretation of recent events and uses the conspiracy and Catiline himself as illustrations in a much larger thesis. Sallust traces the history of Rome from its foundations, through the monarchy, which had 'degenerated into an oppressive despotism' (7) and into the early days of the Roman Republic, when 'virtue was held in high regard. The closest unity prevailed and avarice was a thing almost unknown' (10). These halcyon days came to an end when 'Carthage, Rome's rival in her quest for empire, had been annihilated, every land and sea lay open to her. It was then that fortune turned unkind and confounded all her enterprises'; the unchallenged power and wealth of Rome and the 'growing love of money and the lust for power which followed, engendered every kind of evil'. The evil that Sallust highlights as the most damaging is 'avarice', which he considered 'a kind of deadly poison which ruins a man's health and weakens his moral fibre' (10). He examines Rome during the proscriptions and the lengths to which men were prepared to go in order to exploit the misfortunes of others, and then considers the effect of excess wealth on the Sullan veterans, believing them to have been materially indulged by their commander. Sallust writes scathingly of the conspicuous consumption that marked these years, the dereliction of religion and rejection of the *mos maiorum*, the value system that had governed Rome in earlier years. Self-indulgence and sexual excess had resulted and 'virtue began to decline' (13), to the detriment of both personal and public life. Sallust later records a letter from Manlius, which he may have fabricated, to lend weight to his arguments of a society sick from root to branch. It describes the dire economic hardships of 63 and argues that senatorial indifference and failure to stabilise the currency had exacerbated a desperate situation (33). Sallust (14) links the problems of Rome directly with Catiline and his supporters: 'amid the corruption of the great city, Catiline could easily surround himself, as with a bodyguard, with gangs of profligates and criminals'.

Rather disarmingly, Sallust (5) places himself within this fallen society: 'self-restraint, integrity and virtue were disregarded; unscrupulous conduct, bribery and profit-seeking were rife ... led astray by ambition and, with a young man's weakness, [I] could not tear myself away'. He presents the pressures as, 'prevailing corruption', commenting that 'my craving for advancement exposed me to the same odium and slander as all my rivals'. For him the answer was clear: 'I decided that I must bid farewell to politics for good', and he chose to become a writer 'of some episodes that seemed particularly worthy of record'. Sallust contrasts his own experience with that

of Catiline, who inhabited the same corrupt society but was unable to eschew temptation or learn his lesson from previous bad behaviour. Instead, 'amid the corruption of the great city, Catiline could easily surround himself, as with a bodyguard, with gangs of profligates and criminals'. The stage is now set. Sallust has drawn Catiline as the villain that Rome deserves: the product of the moral degeneration of a decaying society on an individual trained in what remains of Roman virtue. The nobles who support Catiline are caricatures, drawn from the same cesspool of good turned to evil. Sallust's moralising and judgemental tone, the use of the characters and facts to lend weight to his theory of Rome's decline and collapse, send out clear signals of caution to the historian examining the text and must be taken into consideration in any evaluation.

Much has been made of Sallust's portrayal of Cicero's role in 63. The two men had been on different sides in 52 during the prosecution of Milo and in the Civil War. Several of Cicero's key actions are omitted totally from Sallust's account, most importantly the Second and Fourth Speeches. Sallust includes many of Cicero's contributions such as the impact of the First Speech when Cicero 'rendered the state good service' (31), his effective exercise of the SCU and his role in trapping the conspirators in Rome by using the Allobroges, but his account is far from Cicero-centric. Cicero is presented as an important but not a heroic character and none of the self-aggrandising statements and claims to have been the saviour of Rome find any place in Sallust's account. Sallust would have known and used Cicero's own Catilinarian speeches, which were widely available at the time he was writing. It can be argued that the inclusion of large extracts would have added little that was not already known about the events of the year, which may partly explain their omission. *The Catilinarian Conspiracy* was probably written in 41, after the deaths of Cicero, Caesar and Cato, and Sallust tempers his praise for Cicero with admiration for both Caesar and Cato, thus placing Cicero's contribution to Catiline's defeat in perspective. Wilkins (1994: 99) concludes, 'Cicero is acknowledged, not glorified'.

Scholarly opinion is divided on whether the speeches in Sallust's account and attributed to Caesar and Cato in the debate on 5 December should simply be 'dismissed as products of the historian's imagination' (Drummond 1995: 9). Although Plutarch recorded that Cicero had transcripts made of the debate, these may have been for his own personal use, and it seems more likely that Sallust relied upon oral tradition and Cicero's own published Fourth Speech to write his account of Caesar's contribution to the debate. The tone and language of the speech reveal many characteristics of Sallust himself and, according to Drummond (1995: 41), 'there is no effort even to catch the colour of Caesar's style'. Although the content of Caesar's speech broadly accords with that of Cicero's summary in the Fourth Speech, that could be because Sallust used it as a source, and Drummond concludes (1995: 47), 'the principal lines of the speech seem to spring from Sallust's own conceptions'.

A close examination of Cato's speech reveals that 'Cato's extended passages of moral condemnation ... largely coincide with views expressed by Sallust elsewhere in the mono-graph' and that 'the formulation of Cato's proposal is, therefore, clearly Sallustian. So also is probably its content, apart from the bare motion for execution' (1995: 75). Sallust's version of the two speeches is followed by a famous passage in which he compares the virtues and abilities of Caesar and Cato. Caesar emerges as an impressive general and statesman and Cato as a strong defender of the Republic and an embodiment of the traditional virtues that had made Rome great; the two men represent the old and the new in Roman politics and morality, with Cato the defender of traditional values and Caesar the future of Rome.

Plutarch includes an account of Cicero's role in the conspiracy in his *Life of Cicero*, one of his earliest and least polished Lives. He used a variety of sources for his Lives, including annalistic historians such as Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, although, for his *Life of Cicero*, it is unlikely that he used the writings of Asinius Pollio, whose histories began at 60 and which Plutarch used in translation for other Lives, and which both Dio and Appian also used as a source. Plutarch was also familiar with Cicero's own work. As well as the four speeches, Cicero wrote a *Memoir* of his consulship in 60 which was published in Greek and distributed throughout Greece by Atticus. Cicero's inclusion of words such as 'saviour' and 'founder' when discussing his own performance would have struck a chord with his Greek readers, whose practice was to venerate those whose achievements had approached the godlike. Plutarch used this *Memoir* in his own account of the conspiracy and also used a book on Cicero by Tiro, the orator's secretary, which was in circulation. Plutarch also had access to Sallust's *Histories*.

Plutarch was very interested in Roman history but also wrote with a moral purpose and paired Greek and Roman subjects to explore how virtue manifested itself in two contrasting societies. Plutarch's conclusion (*Cicero* 22) was that 'the Roman people were indebted ... for preservation and safety to Cicero alone', and he echoes the consul's own feelings about his achievements in 63. Although this verdict may be partly due to the nature of the sources Plutarch used, it would also accord with his stated intention of exploring virtue at work in a political leader during an important historical event. Although Cicero had not been found wanting, his desire for self-congratulation was as 'odious' to Plutarch (*Cicero* 24) as it had been to Cicero's contemporaries, and Plutarch's own treatise entitled *Self-praise without Offence* expresses his feelings on the subject very clearly.

Note

- 1 Known as Africa Nova between the death of Cato in 46 and the conquest of Egypt in 30, after which it was transferred to King Juba II.

6

FRIENDS AGAINST THE WORLD, 62–
59

A land fit for a hero

The optimate majority in the Senate had remained intact during Pompey's absence. Although they had stridently challenged the *lex Gabinia* in 67, many senators had accepted that Pompey was the right man to replace Lucullus in 66, but his unparalleled success in the East had become a matter of grave concern. Pompey had expanded both direct and indirect Roman rule; the specific settlement of each area had largely depended upon its internal stability and strategic importance. The southern Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean were now ring-fenced by the Roman provinces of Bithynia-Pontus, Asia, Cilicia and Syria, with Asia no longer an isolated and vulnerable outpost of empire. Because most of the coastal lands now making up the new Roman provinces had been Greek kingdoms, many cities already existed which made it possible to impose Roman administrative structures with relative ease. Bithynia-Pontus was divided into eleven communities, each based around a city, and Pompey created thirty-nine cities within Asia and Syria to encourage the inhabitants of the region to look towards the west and away from the possible attractions of Parthia. A considerable degree of internal independence was permitted throughout the new provinces. Each was to be ruled by a Roman governor who would maintain law and order and administer justice but routine administration and city life were in the hands of the inhabitants, who had to ensure that taxation was paid.

Pompey stopped short of further territorial expansion inland and created a network of client kingdoms to ensure stability and provide a valuable buffer against any Parthian expansion from the East. Loyal rulers who had supported the Roman cause such as Antiochus of Commagene, Deiotarus of Galatia and Ariobarzanes of Cappadocia found themselves rewarded with land, and Pharnaces, the son of Mithridates, was allowed to keep the Bosphorus with the status of friend and ally of Rome. The use of these client kings greatly increased Rome's potential power and influence in the area and this status was given to the rulers of Paphlagonia, Bosphorus, Colchis, Commagene, Galatia, Cappadocia, Judaea, Armenia and other smaller areas. They were allowed to retain considerable independence of action within their own kingdoms, but were expected to consult on matters of foreign policy and assist militarily if required; they also paid tribute to Rome.

The Roman treasury had greatly benefited from Pompey's campaign and had received 480 million sesterces in cash and treasure, and tribute from the area increased by 70 per cent from 200 million to 340 million sesterces. Pompey's personal wealth consisted of the loot and plunder of victory, but he also had many personal creditors such as Ariobarzanes of Cappadocia who found it difficult to raise money even for his interest payments. During the winter of 64 Pompey's quaestors had taken thirty days to count, list and audit the treasury of Mithridates in the city of Taurora alone, recording 36,000

talents in gold and silver; this process was repeated in many other places. He had now overtaken Crassus as the richest man in Rome but 'more than wealth, Pompey had acquired *clientelae* on a scale hitherto unwitnessed. Not merely individuals and cities but provinces and kingdoms acknowledged him as their patron'. The kings in the East 'all owed their position to Pompey's recognition of their talents and it is noteworthy how many were later to rally to his cause during the Civil War' (Seagar 2002: 62).

In January 62 Metellus Nepos, backed by the new praetor Caesar, proposed that Pompey should return immediately to Italy to deal with Catiline's army and stand *in absentia* for the consulship. The evidence lacks precision but the powers proposed were sweeping. It is unlikely Nepos was acting on direct orders as it would have been extremely difficult to secure the return of Pompey in enough time to defeat Catiline. He was in Amisus on the Euxine coast making his final territorial arrangements in Bithynia-Pontus when the final battle was fought, but had presumably given Nepos instructions to exploit any situation in whatever way he thought appropriate. Unsettling memories of Pompey's return in 71 and his consulship of 70 must have flooded the collective optimate memory and Cato, also tribune for 62, rounded on Nepos so vigorously that the SCU had to be passed when they came to blows. No further action was taken against Nepos, although Caesar was suspended from the Senate for his behaviour, and Nepos returned to Pompey, having done nothing to allay concerns about how his commander might behave when he returned. Caesar had recently backed a tribunician proposal to give Pompey the right to wear a *toga praetexta*, a purple toga, and gold crown at the games. He had also attempted to have the prestigious work of restoring the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitol transferred from Catulus to Pompey; Catulus had attempted to implicate Caesar in the Catilinarian conspiracy and Caesar was responding in kind. Now Caesar retired from the fray. He had received considerable popular support for his actions and, with promises of good behaviour offered and accepted, was reinstated as praetor.

In the spring of 62 Pompey lavishly rewarded his loyal troops and officers, to whom he is said to have distributed the enormous sum of 384 million sesterces. As his presence in Italy was not urgently required, his return to Rome was leisurely. After calling in at Mytilene he rejoined his fleet at Ephesus and visited his mentor Posidonius in Rhodes where he spent some time in philosophical discussion. Pompey's final stop was Athens, which had been devastated by Sulla. He gave a generous grant to assist the rebuilding of the city, lingered to enjoy its architectural and artistic attractions, and finally landed in Brundisium in December 62. Pompey now needed the Senate to ratify his Eastern Settlement and to grant land for his veterans. More intangibly he wished 'for power freely given and for acclaim gratefully bestowed by a reverential public for glorious achievements in the service of the state' (Mitchell 1991: 78). He was to be disappointed.

Aware of potential opposition, Pompey had written to the Senate as early as

spring 62 and had insisted he had no desire to cause any trouble. His pleas had fallen on many deaf ears. Pompey had been a key architect of the restoration of the powers of the tribunes in 70 which had destroyed the Sullan ideal of a supreme, dominant and unchallengeable Senate, and hostility towards him over this issue still lingered, particularly as he had been granted his extraordinary commands by tribunes and not the Senate. Many optimates did not trust his intentions and believed he would 'straightway lead his army against the city, and that a monarchy would be securely established' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 43). Therefore their prime objective became to nip his career in the bud. As Catulus aged, leadership of the optimates increasingly fell into the hands of the rising star Cato, who disliked Pompey personally but also had a particular hatred of men whose influence was too great and whose careers unbalanced the Republican system. Cato saw Pompey as an aberration who needed to be cut down to size. Many other senators were critical of Pompey's arrangements in the East because they believed the Empire was already large enough. Ongoing problems in running the provinces efficiently indicated that their Republican structures were completely inadequate to meet the challenge of ruling additional lands effectively and securely; the measures taken by Pompey, largely on his own initiative, to ring-fence the Eastern Mediterranean with Roman provinces were viewed as irresponsible and typical of a man whose ambition had always been a cause of concern.

Other politicians, however, awaited Pompey's return with eagerness, and foremost among these was Cicero. When Pompey left for Asia Cicero had been a praetor with a sparkling legal career who had eloquently advocated the *lex Manilia*, now he was *pater patriae* who had protected Rome in Pompey's absence. Nepos, who had prevented Cicero making his valedictory speech, was an ally of Pompey and it had become clear that Cicero's successes, and particularly his trumpeting of them, had annoyed Pompey. Cicero genuinely believed Pompey had the popularity, *auctoritas*, and political skills required to perpetuate the unanimity of opinion he had moulded in 63, but suggestions that Pompey might lead *concordia ordinum* on his return were brushed aside, and letters from the triumphant Cicero went unanswered, much to his bewilderment. In April 62 Cicero compounded the damaging effect of his Fourth Catilinarian speech in a letter to Pompey (*ad fam.* 5.7). 'My achievements have been such that I expected to find a word of congratulation upon them in your letter, both for friendship's sake and for the commonwealth.' Misjudging Pompey's mood completely, Cicero added, 'When you return you will find that I have acted with a measure of policy and a lack of self-regard which will make you well content to have me as your political ally and private friend'.

Caesar was now extremely unpopular with the optimates and they had an opportunity to attack him later in the year when attempts were made to root out all associates of Catiline. Caesar's name was found on two lists, one submitted by Cicero's spy Curius, the second by Vettius. Caesar reacted

decisively and stridently to defend his reputation and no one profited from their attempts to implicate him. Caesar had continued to support Pompey in the Senate during his years in the East, despite his links with Crassus, but their paths barely crossed after Pompey's return. Caesar officially offered thanks to Pompey in the Senate in January 61, and immediately departed for Spain as propraetor.

Crassus removed himself and his family from Rome when Pompey's arrival was imminent. Plutarch (*Pompey* 43) speculates that this contributed to the rumours that Pompey was going to march on the city, concluding that Crassus probably 'wished to give credibility to the calumny and make the envious hatred of Pompey more severe'. It would seem equally likely that Crassus could not bear to witness the spectacle of his *bête noir* returning in glory. Crassus had begun the 60s as the richest man in Rome but that title was no longer his: he had also scored no major military victories since the Spartan revolt, had defeated no pirates and had taken no new provinces. All his attempts to remain on terms with Pompey during his absence had been scuppered by the optimates and, having failed to secure the many new clients he had hoped for, he had retired as censor. Crassus was not looking forward to his rival's return.

Aware of the apprehension many senators felt about his return, Pompey landed at Brundisium in December 62 and immediately dispersed his army, choosing to travel to Rome with a group of followers and friends; this could hardly be seen as threatening behaviour. It is possible he was attempting to allay the fears of those senators who believed that he might repeat the manner of Sulla's return in 83, but it is equally likely that Pompey believed his reputation and popularity more than adequate to secure his demands on his return and arrogantly proceeded without his army because he had misjudged the level of opposition he would face. If he had hoped to enter Rome quietly, however, his plan failed. As he travelled through Italy supporters joined Pompey in such great numbers that, according to Plutarch, if he had been planning any 'revolutionary changes', he would certainly have 'no need of the army that he had disbanded' (*ibid.*).

Pompey was a very different personality from Sulla. He was a man who liked to be rewarded; seizing power was not his style and, given the extent of his achievements, Pompey must have been very disappointed by his lukewarm reception. When he requested a delay in the consular elections to enter the city and assist his candidate, Pupius Piso, Pompey encountered first-hand the withering force of Cato's opposition. Realising that Cato was likely to prove an obstacle, Pompey had conceived a plan to neutralise any threat he posed while attaching himself more closely to the heart of the optimate nobility. Pompey admired 'Cato's boldness of speech and the firmness which he alone publicly displayed in defence of law and justice', and he had 'set his heart on winning him [Cato] over in some way or other'. Pompey, therefore, summarily divorced his wife, Mucia, who had, allegedly but conveniently,

been 'playing the wanton' (*Pompey* 42) during his absence, and proposed a marriage connection between his family and that of Cato. He had assumed that Cato would be flattered, but he scornfully rejected the proposition: 'Cato saw through the design, which he thought aimed at corrupting him and in a manner bribing him by means of a marriage alliance' (*Pompey* 44). In his arrogance Pompey had failed to appreciate that he was completely unacceptable to this arch-defender of senatorial privilege and supremacy. By making his offer to Cato, Pompey lost important Metelli support, as Mucia was the half-sister of Metellus Nepos and Metellus Celer, now the leading candidate for the consulship of 60. When Cato also rejected his approaches, Pompey lost doubly from the episode. Pompey's best interests would have been served if he had secured the co-operation of both the consuls of 60 but he had now secured the lasting enmity of one of them, and Seagar (2002: 76) concludes, 'the great man had made a fool of himself, and the immediate future looked stormy'.

There were others within the Senate with personal reasons for disliking Pompey, and first among these was Lucullus, who had been 'treated outrageously by Pompey in Asia' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 46). His removal had seriously rankled and, despite having enjoyed a notoriously self-indulgent retirement, it took little persuasion to bring Lucullus back into the political fray to spearhead the optimate campaign against Pompey. Cicero wrote to Atticus in February 61 (1.14) that Pompey's first public speech was badly received and describes 'a frost' in the Senate. Cicero was also having problems with Pompey, who was outwardly polite but lacked warmth, and he concluded that, although Pompey 'professes a high regard for me ... praising me on the surface ... he's jealous' (*ad Att.* 1.13). Cicero was bewildered and angry, and in January 61 he wrote to Atticus that Pompey was 'awkward, tortuous, politically paltry, shabby, timid, disingenuous', the harshest criticism he ever made of Pompey, even when his comments of 50 and 49 are taken into account. Holliday (1969: 20) suggests that Cicero had detected 'hypocrisy as well as jealousy', in the great man. Cicero had hoped for a political partnership and he was bitterly disappointed.

In contrast, Cicero was getting on better with Crassus. When Pompey failed to praise Cicero during his first speech, Crassus rose to his feet and delivered an 'encomium' on Cicero's achievements, claiming he owed him 'his freedom and his very life'. Undoubtedly the purpose of such fulsome praise was to irritate Pompey, and Cicero's immediate response of leaping to his feet to take yet another opportunity to discuss his achievements must have been very galling. Cicero was delighted with his performance, writing to Atticus, 'how I spread my tail in front of my new audience, Pompey ... you should know by now how I can boom away on such topics. I think you must have caught the reverberations in Epirus' (*ad Att.* 1.14). There is also evidence of financial links between Crassus and Cicero at this time. When Cicero transferred the province of Macedonia to Antonius they had entered into a deal to share the

profits of office, but Antonius had been slow to pay up and Cicero now found himself short of ready cash. Crassus probably lent Cicero money which he may have used at the end of 62 to buy a splendid mansion on the Palatine from Crassus for 3.5 million sesterces, a bargain price at the time.

The Bona Dea affair

Pompey's return coincided with a *cause célèbre* in Rome which dominated the political agenda in 61 and pushed his own demands firmly to the sidelines for the rest of the year. In December 62 the annual festival of Bona Dea had been held at the house of Julius Caesar, urban praetor and *pontifex maximus*, presided over by his wife Pompeia. The rites of the Good Goddess, whose intervention was believed to be crucial in the processes of conception and childbirth, was an annual event strictly restricted to women, but Publius Clodius Pulcher was apparently discovered during the evening disguised as a female flute player. His presence defiled this most sacred of rites. As Cicero wrote to Atticus (1.12), 'The matter is a sensational scandal, and I am sure that you are shocked'. Clodius had jeopardised the *pax deorum*, the peace of the gods and, although the Vestal Virgins hurriedly repeated the rituals on his departure, the episode cast long shadows for many of those involved. Publius Claudius Pulcher, by plebeian adoption known to posterity as

Clodius, came from one of the most eminent families in Rome. The first Claudius consul had been elected in 495 and the Pulchri were the senior line of the family. Appius Claudius Pulcher had been *princeps senatus* in 133 and, as father-in-law of Tiberius Gracchus, had supported his *lex agraria*. His son Appius had been one of Sulla's closest supporters and was consul in 79. On his untimely death in 77 Appius left three sons, of whom Publius was the youngest, and three daughters, the eldest of whom, Clodia, was the wife of Metellus Celer and perhaps the mistress of the poet Catullus. Tatum writes that 'Claudian greatness confronted Clodius at every turn, in the trophies and images of his family's atrium and throughout the city' (1999: 38); Clodius was ambitious for power but it was not easy to follow in the footsteps of those who had built the Appian Way and the Temple of Bellona. If it was difficult for a *novus homo* to succeed in politics it could be equally problematic for a man such as Clodius, carrying the weight of his family's history and expectations upon his shoulders in a hyper-competitive political system. Only one consul had to be a patrician, which further reduced the odds, and as a patrician Clodius was also barred from holding the tribunate, often a convenient stepping stone to higher office. Connections and wealth were not always enough to maintain a family's political edge, but political failure for a man with such a pedigree not only undermined the family honour but also his own *dignitas*.

Any study of Clodius is hampered by the sources available. Much of what we know comes from Cicero, who was extremely hostile to him for personal reasons. Later sources such as Plutarch and Dio used Cicero as their own principal source and were clearly influenced by his judgements. In the 50s, Asconius annotated some of Cicero's speeches and introduced an element of criticism which is useful for some balance, but Clodius largely remains a

shadowy personality although many of his actions are well recorded. An examination of his career before Bona Dea reveals that Clodius had already quarrelled with Cato in 73, when he had attacked the administration of state religion and had unsuccessfully accused Fabia, one of the Vestals, of *incestum*, unchastity; as she was Cicero's wife's half-sister this had brought the two men into conflict. Clodius had served with his brother-in-law Lucullus in the East and the sources give a confused account of an army mutiny he instigated at Nisibis during the winter of 68–67. He then became prefect of Marcius Rex's fleet and served in Pompey's campaign against the pirates during which he was kidnapped. He was released because Pompey was sweeping towards the Eastern Mediterranean, certainly not because of the paltry and humiliatingly small ransom offered by the King of Cyprus, Ptolemy. He then worked for Marcius in Syria and Antioch, not very successfully, according to Dio (36.17), who insists that he was forced to flee to Egypt.

When Clodius returned to Rome he took on the role of prosecutor when Catiline was facing trial for extortion in Africa in 65. Cicero (*ad Att.* 1.2) had considered defending Catiline and wrote of 'the complete compliance of the prosecution', which suggests that Catiline was acquitted largely because of collusion with Clodius, although the *Handbook on Electioneering* (10) suggests that bribery was the main reason for the outcome. For whatever reason, Clodius lost his first trial and decided not to pursue a legal career and accompanied Lucius Murena, praetor in 65, to Transalpine Gaul where he had been appointed governor. Although Cicero later claimed Clodius had abused his power in Gaul, it is unlikely Murena would have tolerated anything on the scale that Cicero suggests (*De haruspicum responso* 42). On their return Clodius threw his support behind Murena in the consular elections of 63 and, after Murena beat Catiline, Clodius continued to support him in his trial for electoral corruption at the end of the year. Cicero repeatedly alleged that Clodius was complicit in the Catilinarian Conspiracy but there is no evidence to substantiate his views.

Clodius was elected quaestor for 61 and was a popular figure in the city with important family and friends, but his activities had already made many senators wary. His arrogance was very clear but that was a family trait. More worrying was his recklessness, and his behaviour at the Bona Dea rites added moral depravity to their growing list of concerns. Religious observance mattered a great deal in late Republican Rome and Clodius's behaviour had profaned the sacred mysteries. It was rumoured that Caesar's wife Pompeia was having an affair with Clodius which explained his presence in their house and, although Caesar never acknowledged this, he swiftly divorced her, thus distancing himself from the distasteful incident. Caesar did not vent his spleen on Clodius but a well-respected senator, Cornificius, did not share his restraint. He brought a motion before the Senate to try Clodius before a special tribunal for '*incestum*' and received significant senatorial support for

his proposal. The specific crime was an innovative variation on the traditional definition, sex with a family member or the defiling of a Vestal, and broadened its scope to include the invasion of the sacred rites of Bona Dea herself.

The consul Pupius Piso, according to Cicero, 'a cross-grained individual', and a friend of Clodius, was now called upon to promulgate a Bill to bring him to trial. Cicero pithily recounts Piso's dilemma in a letter to Atticus (1.13) on 25 January 61: 'Piso, out of friendship for P. Clodius is working for the rejection of the Bill which he is himself proposing'. As opposition mounted, Cicero started to believe that pursuit of Clodius could prove counter-productive and lead to 'great mischief in the body politic'. Clodius had responded by forming 'gangs of roughs' (*ad Att.* 1.14) and was clearly prepared to use them. He had many supporters among the privileged young men of Rome who had transferred their loyalties from Catiline, symbolising their allegiance by replacing the trademark Catilinarian chinstrap beard with the Clodian goatee. Cicero describes these 'goateed young bloods, the whole Catilinarian gang', who turned up at the Assembly on the day the Bill concerning Clodius' trial was to be considered. There was an inauspicious start when 'Consul Piso, the proposer of the Bill, spoke against it' but, much more menacingly, 'Clodius' roughs had taken possession of the gangways'. The vote returned no 'ayes' and it seemed that intimidation had won the day, but the situation was salvaged by a 'rally of optimates', led by Cato who took the platform and gave 'Consul Piso a spectacular dressing-down'. The proceedings were challenged and the Senate was summoned. Despite appeals from Piso and Clodius and opposition from Curio, the Bill was passed 400 to 15 and the Senate refused to consider any further business 'until the Bill has been put to the Assembly'. Clodius had faced determined opposition led by Cato and Lucullus with the backing of important senators such as Hortensius and Catulus; despite his 'pathetic speeches, full of abusive attacks', they had now clearly gained the upper hand.

Pompey was waiting outside the city preparing to triumph and had not been involved in any of the proceedings so far, but Fufius Calenus, a tribune and a friend of Clodius, decided to question Pompey in front of a large crowd at the Flaminian Circus about jury selection in the upcoming trial. Normally jurors would be chosen by lot, but in this case they were to be chosen by the urban praetor who would also preside. Unwilling to alienate a Senate that had already proved hostile, Pompey replied 'that in all matters he held and had always held the Senate's authority in the highest respect' (*ibid.*). Messalla, the other consul of 61 who was considered by Cicero to be 'courageous, steady, conscientious', possibly because 'I am the object of his praise, regard and imitation' (*ibid.*), convened the Senate outside the city and also questioned Pompey. Again Pompey was circumspect and commended the Senate as a body; he was evading the specific question. Clodius must have been extremely disappointed by Pompey's response as he had fought in his campaign against

the pirates and had expected his support, but the enemies of Clodius had also been fiercely critical of Pompey. Pompey was a realist and understood that 'to lend his influence to the defence would automatically put him in opposition to those very optimates whose help he most needed at the moment' (Leach 1978: 115).

Clodius hoped to stir up enough ill feeling against the Senate to enable Fufius to veto the Bill when it was again presented to the Assembly and held endless meetings on street corners with Cicero himself taking 'a brisk and vigorous part in the fray' (*ad Att.* 1.16). Hortensius decided to change the basis of jury selection to prevent a tribunician veto being used, confident that 'no jury on earth could acquit Clodius', and declaring that 'a sword of lead would be sharp enough to cut Clodius' throat'. Unfortunately the result, according to Cicero, who was very critical of the selection process, was 'a jury of paupers', and he told Atticus, 'there was never a viler crew around the table in a gambling hell' (*ibid.*).

Details of the trial which was held in early May are sketchy. In matters of *incestum* evidence could be taken from slaves, but Clodius had already despatched any likely witnesses to his estates in Gaul. There is evidence that Caesar's mother and sister testified to the presence of Clodius at the rites and that Lucullus blackened his character with tales of incest with his sisters and details of Clodius' role in the mutiny at Nisibis. Clodius had insisted that he had been out of Rome on the evening in question, enjoying a meal with a close friend, Schola, in the town of Interamna, ninety miles outside Rome. Cicero gave evidence which contradicted his alibi by placing Clodius in Rome on the morning of the rites. This caused uproar in court and the jury were so alarmed by the threatening presence of Clodius' supporters that they formed a bodyguard around Cicero and then asked for protection while they deliberated.

It seemed to be an open-and-shut case and, in the face of such overwhelming evidence 'the accused and all his counsel collapsed in despair' (*ibid.*), but Clodius was acquitted by thirty-one votes to twenty-five the following day. Cicero was incensed. He wrote to Atticus that the jury had reached its verdict because 'Baldhead' had stepped in, using an ex-gladiator as an intermediary. It has been speculated this was Crassus, as Cicero also referred to him as 'my encomiast of whose complimentary speech I wrote to you', although there is no definitive evidence about the individual's identity.

He settled the whole business, called them to his house, made promises, backed bills, or paid cash down. On top of that (it's really too abominable) some jurors actually received a bonus in the form of assignations with certain ladies or introductions to youths of noble families.

(Cicero, *ibid.*)

Twenty-five jurors resisted the temptation to take the inducements offered, according to Cicero, 'preferring to sacrifice their own lives rather than the community'; as for the others, 'light purses mattered more than light reputations' (*ibid.*). The political establishment reeled at this body blow. Crassus may have organised the payments, but Cicero wrote that 'he [Clodius] emerged from that trial utterly naked, as if from a shipwreck!' Clodius must have spent his own fortune to secure his acquittal.

The sorry episode blighted Clodius' career and left him with a reputation for scandal and irresponsibility. The Senate had given him little support, his enemies had paraded all his vices, real and imagined, during his humiliating trial, and his acquittal was put down to his corruption, not to his innocence. Cicero was particularly stinging in his criticisms, turning on Piso, criticising the jurors and attacking Clodius in the Senate in a speech known as *In Clodium et Curionem*, of which only fragments remain. The two men clashed frequently in the Senate and, after Clodius had sarcastically drawn attention to Cicero's purchase of a new house on the Palatine, Cicero retorted, 'one might think he was saying that I had bought a jury'. It just remained for Cicero to remind the senators that both Lentulus and Catiline had been twice acquitted by juries before they met their fates, and to warn Clodius that recent events would not 'preserve you for the streets of Rome but for the death chamber' (*ibid.*).

Cicero concluded that the Bona Dea trial had done him no personal harm. He wrote to Atticus that he was even more popular with 'the dregs of the city populace than before', that his relationship with Pompey had become closer and that 'honest men' continued in their support (*ibid.*). Cicero continued to attack Piso, who was eventually deprived of his proconsular province of Syria. Clodius had hoped to accompany him as quaestor to restore his depleted fortunes but eventually went to Sicily in 61/60 although no evidence remains of his time there. Cicero believed the events of 61 had seriously challenged the integrity of the courts and the moral authority of the Senate. He had little confidence in his senatorial colleagues, complaining to Atticus (1.20) that they 'did not count and did not care'. There were few consulars in the Senate and most were undistinguished. Catulus, Lucullus and Hortensius were all ageing, and the rise of Cato gave Cicero little comfort as he feared his stern unbending qualities which he believed inimical to the best interests of the Republic. Cicero had detected the envy of many senators since his consulship ended. He had hoped to play a more important role as one of the *principes*, the leading citizens, but he remained on the edge, still excluded by the disadvantages of birth from full acceptability. Another casualty of the trial was *concordia ordinum*. The united front of senators and *equites* of 63 was fatally damaged by the behaviour of the Clodian jury. The senators rediscovered their contempt for the equestrian order and when Cato proposed a Bill to investigate the bribery of juries the *equites* viewed it as personal attack, even though there were also senators on the jury. They were further

angered when the Senate turned down the request of a company of *publicani* to revise the terms of their tax contract in Asia. By the end of 61 Cicero was discussing with Atticus a 'middle way' in politics by which he could serve the Republic, but also his own best interests, more comfortably. He saw his future with Pompey, using the phrase *novae amicitiae*, new friendships, in a letter to Atticus (1.19). Fortunately, Pompey was starting to have the same idea.

The First Triumvirate

Pompey's difficulties with the Senate had continued and he found himself in the embarrassing position of having secured neither land for his veterans nor the ratification of his Eastern Settlement by the summer of 61. Clodius' trial had been enormously time-consuming and now Pompey needed to procure supportive magistrates for 60 to assist him. Metellus Celer, the front-runner for consul, had been one of Pompey's military legates, but his loyalty had been seriously tested when Pompey divorced his sister Mucia. Although Pompey decided to support his campaign, Celer made it clear after he was elected that he was not prepared to help his old commander. Pompey also backed Afranius, another of his legates, who was described by Cicero as 'a gutless, witless warrior' (*ad Att.* 1.18). He was a *novus homo* with little senatorial experience and his choice as consular candidate demonstrates that Pompey had no further expectations of optimate support. Cicero reported the use of extensive bribery to secure the election of Afranius as consul and of Flavius as tribune, and that Piso had even got 'distributing agents' at his home (*ibid.*). The Senate proposed a Bill to make it legal to search magistrates' houses, and another which stated it was illegal to harbour distributing agents. Although the Bills failed, their target was transparent. Despite these challenges, Afranius and Flavius were elected, but they faced a wall of opposition, and the quibbling obstructionist tactics of Pompey's optimate enemies made it impossible for him to move forward.

Faced with such hostility, Pompey temporarily withdrew from public life after the elections, reappearing only for his Third Triumph in late September, timed to coincide with his forty-fifth birthday. Two separate days were devoted to celebrations on a scale never before witnessed. The sight of eminent prisoners such as the pirate chiefs, the son of Tigranes of Armenia and the sister of Mithridates and her children, the endless placards announcing victories over hitherto unknown lands such as Colchis and Phoenicia, and the ostentatious display of captured treasures, all left an indelible impression. Pompey dedicated his spoils to Minerva and recorded the surrender of 12 million people, more than 1,500 towns and cities and booty worth 20,000 talents for the Treasury. Plutarch (*Pompey* 45) observed that, although other generals had been awarded three Triumphs, in Pompey's case each Triumph was over a different continent. The first celebrated victory in Africa, the second victory in Europe (Spain) and the third Asia, and that 'he seemed in a way to have included the whole world in his three triumphs'. During the triumphal procession Pompey wore a cloak he claimed had once belonged to Alexander the Great, which led Plutarch to speculate on their parallel careers, and to strike a note of caution. He concluded that Pompey's good fortune was about to come to an end and that he was on the cusp of making a series of bad decisions which would strengthen others and lead to his own ruin,

paradoxically 'by the very vigour and magnitude of his own power' (*Pompey* 46).

Pompey praised Cicero's achievements publicly for the first time at the beginning of 60; the need for significant support had certainly been hammered home. As *amicitia* with Pompey was preferable to the envy of many senators, Cicero needed no persuasion to support him and follow 'the middle way' he had already discussed with Atticus. Their new closeness was apparent and Cicero wryly observed (*ad Att.* 1.16) that 'this wretched starveling rabble ... imagines I have no rival in the good graces of the Great One', even nicknaming Pompey 'Cn. Cicero'. Early in 60 the tribune Flavius proposed an agrarian law to provide land for Pompey's veterans and to distribute the public land, especially the Campanian land, to the needy in Rome. Cicero gave this measure his support but the opposition led by Metellus Celer was so vicious that Flavius threw the consul into prison. When Celer summoned the senators to join him there, Flavius sat on a bench blocking the entrance to prevent the meeting and, in retaliation, Celer issued an order to break down the prison walls. Faced with this undignified farce, Pompey ordered Flavius to free Celer and abandon his land proposals. Ratification of the Eastern Settlement was proving no less problematic. Pompey had rather highhandedly asked the Senate to approve his arrangements in the East *en bloc*, with no close reference to the specific details. Lucullus led the opposition and insisted that each clause be considered exhaustively and individually; the turgidity of the ensuing proceedings eventually led Pompey to drop his proposals. Pompey had operated within the political system but had failed. Dio (37.49) concluded, 'he discovered he really had no power at all; his name and past reputation only made people envious and brought him no profit whatsoever'.

Crassus also found himself in an embarrassing position at the beginning of 60. Cato had been scathing about Clodius' acquittal and now made capital out of the senators' rediscovered contempt for the equestrian order. In 61 the company of tax farmers which had recently been given the contract to collect the Asian taxes approached the Senate to ask to renegotiate the price because they had overbid and would find it impossible to collect enough money to pay for the contract or make a profit. They had enlisted the support of both Crassus, whose political and business fortunes were inextricably entwined with the *equites*, and Cicero, who disapproved of their demands but was desperate to keep relations between the orders cordial as he endeavoured to resurrect *concordia ordinum*. Cicero confessed to Atticus (1.17) that he was 'in the front line of their support or rather the second, for it is Crassus who has put them up to making this audacious demand'. As he speculated upon the risks, Cicero's true concerns are revealed: 'if they don't get what they want, they really will be at odds with the Senate; that's the main danger'.

Cato led the opposition, insisting there were no second chances and that the Senate was not prepared to indulge the greed of the *equites*. Cicero (*ad Att.* 2.1) reflected upon the dangers of such a highly-developed moral sense in the

‘dregs of Romulus’, concluding, ‘his high-mindedness is a positive danger to the state’, but also acknowledged that Cato was right and the tax farmers did not have a leg to stand on. Taking a long view, Cicero knew this was a fight not worth pursuing and ‘for the sake of retaining their goodwill we should have been prepared to accept the loss’. Cicero’s words were wise on two levels. Not only were relations between the Senate and the *equites* damaged by the affair, Crassus had been politically embarrassed. Despite his heavyweight support the *equites* could make no further progress and Crassus needed to find an alternative way to maintain his credibility.

Caesar, Crassus’ protégé, also found himself at odds with the Senate in 60. Following his praetorship of 62, Caesar had served as proprator in Further Spain, where he had led a very successful military campaign against disaffected tribesmen. Dio (37.52) suggests that Caesar may well have provoked them, as ‘he was eager for glory, emulating Pompey ... and his aspirations were anything but small’. Plutarch (*Caesar* 11) recounts a story, which may be apocryphal, of a brief sojourn in small Alpine village during Caesar’s journey to Spain. During supper he discussed with friends how, even in such a small place, there would inevitably be power struggles and rivalries, concluding, ‘I would rather be first here than second in Rome’. Plutarch saw Caesar’s ambition as long-term and extreme, and this story fits well with his interpretation. The current political circumstances actually favoured an ambitious politician like Caesar far more than those a generation earlier. During the Catilinarian debate there were only fourteen former consuls present out of about 600 senators. The Sullan civil war still cast long shadows and the senators’ relative youth and inexperience meant that it lacked men of *gravitas*, wisdom, and *auctoritas*. Many of the older generation such as Catulus were at the end of their careers or, like Lucullus, had largely retired from public life. This dearth of elder statesmen opened doors to politicians in their thirties like Caesar and Cato and gave them opportunities previously only open to older politicians. It was not unrealistic to be ambitious in 60.

Caesar had canvassed many senators in anticipation of his return from Spain. He was ready to stand as consul and was looking for support. Cicero had received a letter, although it and all the others have long been lost. Caesar had arranged to stand for the consulship of 59 with Lucceius as running mate, a wealthy associate of Pompey. The precise arrangements between the two candidates were facilitated by Arrius, a known associate of Crassus who would later accompany him on his ill-fated Parthian campaign. Whatever appearance of wealth he gave, Caesar was frequently embarrassed financially. He may have profited from his year in Spain but it is unlikely that he had made enough to mount the sort of campaign Lucceius could fund. When Caesar returned to Rome in the summer of 60 he hoped to stand as consul but also to enjoy the Triumph to which he was entitled. The timing of these twin aspirations was complicated because, as a returning general he was not allowed to enter the city until his Triumph, but as a consular candidate he

needed to cross the *pomerium* to present himself as a candidate and begin campaigning. There were precedents for the Senate to grant permission for someone in Caesar's position either to stand *in absentia* or to enter the city, and Caesar made his request. Cato always resisted men he believed had too much power, and he now placed Caesar in that category. Cato was prepared to be neither flexible nor magnanimous. He had developed the tactic of talking during a debate, and continuing to talk until the session ended and the Senate was dismissed; now he employed this filibuster successfully again. As the Senate was not due to convene again before the list of candidates was published, there was no further opportunity for Caesar to reapply.

Cato and his optimates supporters had reckoned that a man of such ambition and vanity would always choose a Triumph over a consulship, but they had miscalculated. Caesar gave up the glory of a Triumph and entered the city as a candidate, thus winning himself additional support as he was seen to hold the moral high ground in the face of an obstructionist and unreasonable Senate. A Triumph was not an honour to be rejected lightly, as it was hard-won and prestigious, but Caesar had clearly set his mind on higher stakes. Goldsworthy (2006: 194–5) suggests that Cato may have been attempting to ensure the election of his own son-in-law Marcus Calpurnius Bibulus as consul for 59, a man of more modest talents, assuming that Caesar would step back from the elections, hold his Triumph and stand as consul for 58. Bibulus had already been overshadowed by Caesar when they shared the aedileship in 65 and praetorship in 62; it would have been a further family humiliation if he had been defeated in the consular election by Caesar and Luceius.

Caesar was seen as the favourite before he even returned to Italy and Cicero wrote to Atticus (2.1) that Caesar had the advantage of 'a following wind', which, no doubt, Cato would also have sniffed out. The affair between Cato's half-sister Servilia and Caesar still continued and his personal feelings may also have informed his behaviour. Caesar's enemies were 'seized with fear that Caesar would stick at nothing when he became chief magistrate, if he had a colleague who was heart and soul with him'. It was decided to spend as much money as was necessary to secure the election of Bibulus; 'many of them contributed to the fund, and even Cato did not deny that bribery under such circumstances was for the good of the commonwealth' (Suetonius 19). Marshall (1976) suggests that Cato had picked up rumours of a developing relationship between Caesar, Pompey and Crassus even before the election, which would explain this lapse in his normal high standards of conduct in political life. Caesar was returned top of the poll, Bibulus came second and Luceius failed to benefit from his investment.

Cicero saw very clearly the dangers of the Senate's obstructionist policies towards Pompey, Crassus and now Caesar. He warned Cato and urged the optimates to be realistic. Their attempts to cut the three men down to size, to humiliate them, thwart their ambitions and drive them into corners from which there was no escape, now proved counterproductive. The obvious

happened and the embittered trio were driven together. Unable to achieve their objectives individually they opted at some point in 60, and initially in secret, to work together. They formed an *amicitia*, an informal political friendship, a common relationship in Roman politics which was usually temporary to provide mutual support in particular circumstances. But this *amicitia* was different. It was formed between the three most powerful men in Rome who had the backing of the people, wealth, the support of the *equites* and access to armed force if required. It would also be cemented by a marriage alliance between Pompey who was now in his mid-forties, and Julia, Caesar's only child, who was seventeen; Caesar became the father-in-law of a man six years older than himself.

Historians have called this powerful political friendship the First Triumvirate, but the term is not literally correct. This *amicitia* was unofficial and differed fundamentally from the Second Triumvirate of Antony, Lepidus and Octavian in 43 which was formalised by the Senate. Pompey, Caesar and Crassus may have entered their marriage of convenience before the election, which is the verdict of Livy, Appian, Plutarch and Dio, but they may have come together afterwards, which is the conclusion of Velleius, Suetonius and Florus. The weight of evidence would suggest that Crassus and Pompey were both involved in Caesar's campaign for the consulship, which could suggest the *amicitia* pre-dated the election of 60. Their objectives could only be achieved by Caesar as consul and they may have supported him individually at this point, although Marshall (1976) and Ward (1977) both argue that Crassus and Pompey had been reconciled before Pompey landed in Italy, which would suggest that they gave mutual assistance to Caesar, whom they both counted as a friend. Plutarch claimed that Crassus left the city to avoid the return of Pompey in January 61, but his journey to Asia coincided with Pompey's journey home. A meeting in which they came to an agreement is not beyond the realms of possibility although no record is extant, if it ever existed. Whether they decided to form their *amicitia*, collectively or separately, and whenever they reached that agreement, it was in their interests to secure the election of Caesar and this is what they had achieved.

Plutarch (*Caesar* 13) saw Caesar as the architect of the *amicitia*, writing, 'Caesar brought these men together in friendship ... concentrating their united strength upon himself'. The arrangement between the three men merely papered over the cracks to achieve each man's individual objectives and was far from amicable according to Dio (37.54) who, writing of Pompey and Crassus, asserts that 'each of them opposed whatever he saw the other wanted'. Tensions flared between them and it is unlikely they could have cooperated without the influence of Caesar who, again in Dio's words, 'worked on them'. Dio insists that Caesar realised it must be both or neither as 'if he joined forces with either of them alone, he would automatically antagonise the other'. Velleius (2.44) agrees that Caesar saw this as a relationship that would 'strengthen his own position'. After nearly two years

back in Rome Pompey had still not settled his veterans nor had his Eastern Settlement received official approval. Dio (37.55) suggests he was 'not as strong as he hoped ... the power of Crassus and the growing influence of Caesar made him afraid that they would eclipse him completely and led him to hope that if he went into partnership with them they would help him to regain his old authority'. Pompey could not progress and the continued opposition of Lucullus in particular, according to Appian (2.9), 'drove the indignant Pompey to Caesar's side'. Leach (1978: 122) suggests that Pompey had been influenced by his experiences of Eastern rule. He enjoyed power and influence, relished his *auctoritas* and *dignitas* and was keen to be thought of as *princeps* and did not want to compete for consulships or play a competitive role in politics. He appears to have had three main aims, 'to guide rather than rule the Roman state; to be there on call if crisis arose; and, almost like a Hellenistic monarch, to be acknowledged the benefactor of his people'; the Senate had denied him all three since his return.

Crassus was prepared to trim his sail to any passing wind to secure self-advantage and 'readily abandoned both his favours and his resentments at the dictates of his interests'; in politics and business, Crassus was 'neither a steadfast friend nor an implacable enemy' (Plutarch, *Crassus* 7). Ever the arrogant plutocrat, Crassus believed 'his family and wealth gave him a claim to pre-eminence' (Dio 37.55) and he had reached a point in his career where he was in danger of losing the support of the *equites*. He was now 'quite outshone by Pompey and saw Caesar on the way to greatness', and Dio suggests that Crassus saw the Triumvirate as a way to 'set them against each other so that neither could get the upper hand'. Velleius (2.44) agrees that Crassus saw he could use the relationship 'to attain the position of preeminence that he had not managed to reach on his own'. Florus, writing in the second century AD, saw the establishment of the First Triumvirate as the beginning of the end of the Republic, a view shared by many historians such as Plutarch but which appeared first in the writings of Asinius Pollio, who had begun his *History of the Civil War* in 60. Florus (2.13) summed up the motives of the three men. 'So they readily agreed to make an assault on the constitution because each had similar desires for power, although Caesar was anxious to achieve status, Crassus to increase his and Pompey to hold on to his.' Marshall (1976: 104) concludes, 'each man was motivated by self-interest, and the coalition was basically unstable, precariously balanced by mutual suspicion'.

An approach to join the *amicitia* was made to Cicero at the end of 60 through Lucius Cornelius Balbus, a military colleague of Caesar's from Spain who would later become his close political adviser. Caesar had drawn up a Land Bill and wanted Cicero's help in getting it passed. Cicero's support of Crassus over the Asian tax contract and his links with the *equites*, as well as his relationship with Pompey, must have led the three men to believe that he would lend them his support and his oratorical skills. In a letter to Atticus in

December 60 Cicero wrote that Caesar was intending to reconcile Pompey and Crassus at this stage, which suggests that the *amicitia* had not yet been formed, although this could have been simply a negotiating tool used by Caesar to offer Cicero a role in achieving this in order to lure him in. Ward (1977) disagrees and sees Caesar's approach as a genuine desire to enlist Cicero's support in the tricky task of reconciling Pompey and Crassus. If Cicero had cooperated, there would be 'a very close alliance with Pompey, and if I want, with Caesar as well, and a reconciliation with my enemies, peace with the mob and security in my old age' (*ad Att.* 2.3). Whether genuine or merely an attempt to flatter to deceive, Caesar's offer missed its mark and Cicero remained politically independent. Unlike many optimates, Cicero was a moderate who always favoured a consensual approach rather than obstructionist self-serving. While Cato and his cronies took every opportunity to tackle powerful men whose influence and wealth challenged *primus inter pares* and the overarching supremacy of a collective Senate, Cicero looked to social and political reconciliation. If he had colluded with the three, Cicero might have been in a unique position to neutralise their collective threat, but he could equally have lost that degree of independence which enabled him to approach both sides and act as a mediator, a role he felt uniquely qualified to play. Sidelined by the *boni*, the good men, as the leading optimates called themselves, but unwilling to work with the Triumvirs, Cicero now found himself on a lonely road in politics without any firm attachments.

Watching the skies

During Caesar's consulship of 59 Rome was in the grip of powerful men who showed themselves prepared to use force to accomplish their objectives, but how far this was their intention and how far they were given no alternative must be carefully examined. Because he had gained more votes than Bibulus, the honour of holding the *fascēs* first and presiding over the first month of the year fell to Caesar. Bibulus the face of the hostile optimate majority in the Senate who had failed to prevent his election and he was determined to make Caesar impotent in the role. It was not going to be an easy ride and there were major measures to be passed. Caesar had an obligation to Pompey to help him secure land for his veterans as well as that elusive ratification of his Eastern Settlement. Crassus expected the renegotiation of the Asian tax contract in return for his support and 'for himself he wanted a high command, an army and a war in some field where his gifts could shine in all their brightness' (Sallust 54).

Unfortunately Cicero was absent from Rome during the first three months of Caesar's consulship and we are dependent on later historians for details of the key events that took place. Caesar introduced his Land Bill on 1 or 2 January and before he read its terms to the Senate announced he was prepared to amend any clause which was unacceptable. The rule was that a Bill should be published twenty-four days before the Assembly met. It was essential to get the process under way quickly to enable them to get the Bill ratified during January while Caesar held the *fascēs* and it had been prepared in advance to meet the deadlines and facilitate its passage. Caesar had learned from the mistakes of the Rullan and Flavian Bills, and the terms were carefully considered to avoid any obvious controversy. Twenty commissioners were to be appointed to oversee the purchase of land from owners willing to sell, the price was to be in line with true market values and funds were to come from the wealth Pompey had recently placed in the Treasury. The Campanian land, which provided good revenues to Rome, was not included, all existing land occupation was accepted as legal for twenty years, and anyone who received land could not sell it on; hopefully, in this way, new communities would be established. The Commissioners, a large number so bias could not be suspected, were to be elected, not nominated. The Bill's objective clearly was to reward Pompey's veterans with land, but it would also give some assistance to the urban poor. Appian (2.10) records that 'Caesar was a master of dissimulation', and Dio (38.2) claims that, very frustratingly for his political enemies, 'the law had been so framed as to be impossible to fault'. Plutarch, always suspicious of Caesar's motives, commented that 'he proposed laws which were becoming, not for a consul, but for a most radical tribune of the people' (*Caesar* 14).

The Bill was accepted by all past consuls and praetors but immediately

faced problems when Cato was called upon to speak. He admitted that the Bill was good but insisted this was not a year to innovate and filibustered to prevent a vote being taken. The only way to stop Cato was to remove him and Caesar gave orders that he should be taken to prison. So early in the year this was a dramatic gesture which proved to be a mistake, and many senators followed Cato to prison, including Marcus Petreius, the general who had defeated Catiline, who scowlingly remarked he would rather be in jail with Cato than in the Senate with Caesar (Dio 38.3). As the mood was so hostile, Caesar had to order Cato's release. It was clear that conciliation was powerless against the Senate's behaviour, which Plutarch considered 'high-handed and stubborn' (*Caesar* 14). Caesar called a *contio* in the Forum, presented his Bill to the crowd and insisted that his co-consul also spoke, but Bibulus stormed off the platform, asserting, 'You won't have this law this year even if you all want it!' (Dio. 38.4). Crassus spoke in support of the Bill and was followed by Pompey who argued it was fair and would reward the brave soldiers whose efforts had so recently replenished the Roman Treasury and improved everyone's lives. The suggestion that he might also use 'a sword and a shield' was ill judged and only served to increase the concern of the optimates, although 'the populace were de-lighted' (Plutarch, *Caesar* 14).

If Caesar withdrew the Bill it would be seen as capitulation to the optimates and he would lose all credibility so, at the end of January, he decided to present it directly to the Assembly, which was meeting in the more open area of the Forum by the Temple of Castor and Pollux, as a large crowd was expected. Plutarch wrote (*Pompey* 48) that Pompey 'filled the city with soldiers and held everyone down with a firm hand' to secure the passage of this Bill. This seems unlikely, but many of Pompey's veterans had remained in Rome and probably turned up in large numbers to show their support for a measure which would greatly benefit them. While Caesar was speaking, Cato, Bibulus and three tribunes arrived with their attendants and lictors. The crowd parted out of courtesy but also because it was believed that they had changed their minds and come to support the Bill's passage. Bibulus immediately made it clear that such was not the case and the presence of the tribunes suggested they intended to veto the proceedings. They had misjudged the mood of the people. Bibulus was jostled off the platform, his lictors and their *fascēs* were attacked and 'somebody threw a basket of dung all over the head of Bibulus' (*ibid.*), and when Cato attempted to stand firm and speak out against the Bill, a group of Caesar's followers removed him bodily from the Forum. The Bill then passed with a large majority.

The passage of the Land Bill, and the force used to pass it, heightened the optimates' concern about the activities of the three men. It was a requirement of the new law that all senators took an oath to abide by its terms and this was initially resisted by some, notably Cato and Metellus Celer, who eventually agreed grudgingly in the face of Cicero's convincing argument that they would be of little use to the Republic if they were excluded from the Senate.

When Bibulus took over the *fascēs* at the beginning of February he immediately summoned the Senate, presumably hoping for a condemnation of Caesar's actions, possibly even an SCU. He was to be disappointed. The strength of popular support for Caesar's measure had taken many senators by surprise. It is impossible to measure how many shared Cato's extreme views but it seems likely that he was the mouthpiece of a small but extremely important minority of senators who were able to exert an influence disproportionate to their numbers but proportionate to their families' pedigrees, wealth and political importance. Because many other senators had links with Caesar, Pompey and Crassus, or did not support Cato's policies, Bibulus was unable to summon up enough support for his plans.

Having failed to prevent the passage of the Bill, Bibulus now employed different tactics to limit Caesar's activities. Suetonius (20) writes that 'Caesar's conduct drove him to such a pitch of desperation, that from that time until the end of his term he did not leave his house', and it became common to talk of the consulship of 'Julius and Caesar'. Bibulus now focused his efforts on 'watching the skies' (Cicero, *ad Att.* 2.16) and 'issued proclamations announcing adverse omens', in an attempt to control Caesar. The practice was an established one. Roman political life had always placed great emphasis on the will of the gods, which was to be divined by the interpretation of auspices. *Auspicia impetrativa* were sought before any public assemblies convened. The magistrates would use *spectio*, the power to interpret signs from the sky such as the flight of birds and, on the basis of these reports, they would permit or forbid meetings. If *auspicia oblativa*, bad omens, were observed during proceedings, they also could be stopped. Another practice was *obnuntiatio*. A magistrate would spend the night before an assembly watching the sky for signs and omens and was expected to appear in person to announce whether he had observed favourable or unfavourable omens; his findings could not be ignored. Bibulus' repeated use of this tactic, however, was unprecedented. Dio (38.6) writes that 'whenever Caesar was bringing in a new proposal, he sent notice through his attendants that it was a "sacred period" and, legally speaking, Caesar had no right to do any business during it'. Caesar was *pontifex maximus* but the role did not give him the power to overrule Bibulus, who was an augur, as other priests were not subject to his authority. Bibulus' actions should have automatically halted business but his failure to appear in person considerably diminished the impact of his pronouncements and led to obvious questions about their legality. Technically Bibulus may not have used *obnuntiatio* with the precision required, but the impression he created was that Caesar was ignoring the will of the gods. Caesar had much to do and he continued with business despite Bibulus' announcements and prohibitions but, if it could be shown that Caesar was proceeding illegally, which was the intention of Bibulus' strategy, it would make it possible to prosecute him later.

Pompey's Eastern Settlement was finally ratified *en bloc* and when

Lucullus mounted a challenge in the Assembly he was so fiercely attacked by Caesar that he is said to have flung himself to his knees pleading for mercy (Suetonius 20). The Asian tax contract was renegotiated, although Caesar insisted on delivering a caveat that companies must make realistic future bids. Other measures were passed by Caesar during this year, the most important of which was the *lex Julia de Repetundis* which brought much-needed regulation to the role of provincial governors by defining more clearly the parameters of the office and requiring publication of accounts. It also set limits on the right to requisition and receive gifts from provincials, a problem clearly identified in the trial of Verres in 70. The Triumvirs also recognised the claim of Ptolemy Auletes to the throne of Egypt in return for 6,000 talents, to be paid at some future date. This was a significant sum, equivalent to 40 per cent of Rome's annual revenue from its provinces, and a large part of it was to be paid to Caesar himself.

In April or May Caesar introduced another, tougher Land Bill, the *lex Campana*, which divided the remaining 200 square miles of public land in Campania into 20,000 allotments to be shared between the veterans and urban poor with large families. As much of this land was already occupied, there were many evictions and the Roman Treasury lost those rents. The timing was carefully considered, as many senators were absent from Rome visiting their estates when the Bill was introduced. Military rather than civilian needs were at the heart of this Bill and the obligation of the general to his men, a feature of military life since Marius, triumphed. Caesar employed a tribune, Publius Vatinius, to steer these measures through the Assembly; they were not even referred to the Senate for discussion.

When Caesar had left for Spain in March 61 his departure had been delayed because his carriage and wagon train had been seized by his creditors and were retrieved only when Crassus settled his debts. One of Caesar's requirements as consul was a valuable province where he could profitsufficiently to prevent such an embarrassing situation arising again but where he could also develop his military talents. The optimates had proposed that the consuls of 59 be given the forests and cattle tracks of Italy instead of the lucrative province Caesar needed (Suetonius 19). Although these *silvae callesque* could provide some limited financial rewards, they offered no chance of the military glory Caesar craved and it had become increasingly clear he would need to find another way of securing himself a suitable province. The tribune Vatinius proposed that Caesar should receive Illyricum and Cisalpine Gaul as his proconsular provinces, unusually to be granted for five years but, after the death of Metellus Celer, governor-elect of Transalpine Gaul, Pompey proposed in the Senate that Caesar should also receive that province. It was clear from recent events that the Assembly would award Caesar the province if they refused and, to avoid that humiliation, the senators agreed, thus providing Caesar with the military launch-pad he coveted. Vatinius did not come cheap – even Caesar commented on the cost

of his services – but he did make him a legate to remove Vatinius from Rome and any possible retaliation for his work on Caesar's behalf.

It is impossible to pinpoint exactly when the existence of the Triumvirate became open knowledge. The three men had appeared together in January in support of the Land Bill but in April Pompey married Caesar's daughter Julia, which established a permanent tie. As the relationship between the three men and the power they wielded became obvious and public it was not perceived as an *amicitia* but as '*Tricaranus*', the three-headed monster, the title of a hostile political pamphlet written by Varro. Plutarch (*Caesar* 14) comments that 'only a very few used to go with Caesar to the senate; the rest, in displeasure, stayed away', and recounts the tale of an aged senator, Considius, who told Caesar his colleagues were absenting themselves because 'they were afraid of the armed soldiers'. Most of the tribunes were unco-operative and consequently many of the plebs became wary, but they relished the scurrilous pamphlets written by Bibulus and publicly displayed in the Forum. He had dredged up the story of Caesar and Nicomedes, describing Caesar as 'The Queen of Bithynia ... who once wanted to sleep with a king but now wants to be one' (Suetonius 49). When Cicero visited Formiae in April, he was aware that discontent with the regime extended beyond the city and wrote to Atticus (2.13), 'the very fields cannot abide this tyranny'. He also reported that, because of his behaviour, Bibulus had found 'a new pathway to glory' and that he had been 'lifted ... to the skies' (2.20). Suetonius (20) however reports a piece of contemporary doggerel which was less sympathetic: 'In Caesar's year, not Bibulus', an act took place of late,/For naught do I remember done in Bibulus' consulate.'

In April Cicero defended his former consular colleague Antonius against a charge of corruption during his governorship of Macedonia and used the trial to speak out against Caesar's methods, but his efforts were in vain and proved to be ill-timed. Antonius was convicted and exiled to a life of luxury, but he left his defender with a much greater problem. Caesar and Pompey had been pushed to their limits by the obstructionist tactics they had faced over the Land Bill and were not prepared to allow the city's greatest orator to proceed against them unfettered. Seagar (2002: 92) concludes, 'they over-reacted in a fashion that shows how the events of the past three months had frayed their nerves and blunted their judgement'. Only three hours after Antonius' conviction, Caesar as *pontifex maximus* and Pompey as *augur* carried out the plebeian adoption of Clodius. At some point during or after the Bona Dea affair Clodius had decided to change his status from patrician to plebeian to qualify for the tribunate. This was not common but was not unprecedented and could be achieved by a senatorial grant of *transitio*, but Clodius was not popular in the Senate and had faced considerable opposition, led by Metellus Celer, the consul of 60. There was another way to change status and Clodius was now adopted by a twenty-year-old plebeian in front of the Assembly; Claudius officially became Clodius. Tatum (1999: 108) concludes that

‘Clodius’s adoption was engineered and executed by Caesar and Pompey in order to silence Cicero’, and Plutarch (*Caesar* 14) concurs: ‘he was elected, for the overthrow of Cicero’. Pompey and Caesar enabled Clodius to challenge, threaten and effectively muzzle Cicero and the dramatic adoption had an immediate effect: Cicero was silenced.

Pompey and Caesar had assumed that Clodius would work on their behalf but he proved hard to handle and they came to regret their impetuosity. Clodius was volatile and dangerous, and cooler reflection, certainly on Pompey’s part, led to the inescapable conclusion that Cicero was far more use to him than Clodius would ever be. Pompey and Caesar attempted to neutralise Clodius by trying to send him to Tigranes of Armenia on an official mission but, if he had accepted, Clodius would have missed the elections, and he had decided that his route to power was through control of the plebs: Clodius needed to be elected tribune and he refused to go.

Cicero observed that the Triumvirate seemed increasingly unstable. Crassus appeared sidelined, especially after the marriage of Julia and Pompey, although he was also largely spared the unpopularity suffered by his fellow Triumvirs. Opposition to their activities in the city was co-ordinated by Gaius Scribonius Curio, son of the consul of 76, and Cicero wrote to Atticus in June (2.18) that ‘he [Curio] is widely applauded, greeted with great respect in the Forum and treated to many other marks of approval from decent citizens’. Picking up the zeitgeist, but also irritated that Caesar and Pompey appeared to be withdrawing their favours, Clodius responded by declaring himself an enemy of Caesar and announced he would reverse Caesar’s measures if he was elected. Pompey and Caesar’s attempts to clip Clodius’ wings after his hasty adoption coincided with the sidelining of Crassus, who already had links with Clodius and had probably arranged the bribes handed out to the Bona Dea jurors. Crassus could have been well aware of Clodius’ tactics and could have encouraged them. Crassus’s law concerning the Asian tax contract would have been threatened if Clodius had carried out his threat, but so would Pompey’s veteran land arrangements and Eastern Settlement. The collapse of Pompey’s measures would have been extremely embarrassing for him and, on balance, Crassus had much less to lose; it could have been worth it to cause division between Pompey and Caesar.

Pompey was rarely seen in public, preferring the company of his new young wife, and appears to have borne the brunt of the widespread criticism, presumably because he was perceived as senior partner in the Triumvirate. He was targeted at the Ludi Apollinares by a baying crowd who cheered the arrival of Curio in a manner they would normally have reserved for Pompey himself and ‘the actor Diphilis weighed into Pompey mercilessly’ (*ad Att.* 2.19). When he attempted to speak at a public meeting on 25 July Pompey became totally demoralised by the response. Cicero wrote to Atticus (2.21), ‘he was so humiliated, so downcast, so dissatisfied with himself ... he is a fallen star’. Pompey occupied himself as a member of the Commission of

Twenty which was implementing the Land Bill and also established a colony at Capua, but he was hated by the optimates and vilified by those who had always lent him their support; Pompey again found himself unsure which way to turn. Cicero wrote to Atticus in July (2.19) that ‘the dissatisfaction is universal’ and also that ‘the present regime is the most scandalous in history’, comments to be treated with cautious scepticism but reflective of Cicero’s own feelings at the time. The orator was certainly hopeful he could wean Pompey away from Caesar and shortly after wrote to Atticus (2.21) that Pompey was ‘desperately unhappy about the situation and is most anxious to be restored to the position he held before his fall’. The rising tide of unpopularity during the summer of 59, the episodes of hostility at the Games and in the theatre and his pathetic performance on 25 July must have delighted Crassus who no longer had any need to remain in partnership with his old adversary.

As the elections approached Cicero became increasingly concerned about what Clodius might do to him if he was elected tribune. He wrote to Atticus (2.19) in July, ‘Our friend Publius is hostile and has made repeated threats ... Pompey says Clodius will not say a word about me; but he can’t deceive me and is in fact deceived himself’. Clodius had remained on polite terms with Pompey, who assured Cicero that he had nothing to fear from the young man and secured promises from both Clodius and his brother Appius Claudius that they meant Cicero no harm. Cicero remained unconvinced. ‘I wouldn’t have trusted him [Clodius] even if he did stop and would have carried on with the preparations which I am now making’ (*ad Att.* 2.22). Cicero was wise not to be deceived. Clodius was playing a double game, at times hostile to the Triumvirate, at times hostile to the Senate, dangerously unpredictable and carving out an independent and individual path. He was elected tribune easily in either July or August.

Not long after the tribunician elections Pompey was informed of an assassination plot. Gaius Scibonius Curio, father of young Curio, who had been so vocal in his criticism of the Triumvirate, informed Pompey that his son had been approached to join a plot by Vettius, the informer who had attempted to implicate Caesar in the Catilinarian Conspiracy in 62. When he was summoned before the Senate, Vettius negotiated an amnesty and claimed that Curio had organised the conspiracy himself. He named Marcus Brutus, the son of Caesar’s lover Servilia, as one of the accomplices and several older senators, including Cicero and Bibulus, who was alleged to have supplied a dagger. Vettius appeared the next day, by which time Brutus was no longer on his list and various new names such as Lucullus had been added. Before the matter could proceed further Vettius was found dead in prison. Cicero believed this was an attempt by Caesar to muzzle Curio and help restore some of Pompey’s flagging popularity; the

withdrawal of Brutus’ name from the list would lend weight to that interpretation. It is equally likely, however, that there was a plot, possibly co-

ordained by Clodius, who hoped to destabilise Pompey and turn him away from men he thought he could trust such as Cicero. Pompey had been responsible for the death of Brutus' father at Mutina in 77, which could explain his place on the original list, but not why it was later removed. It has been also suggested that the death of Vettius could have been the work of Curio, engaged in rather dramatic damage limitation once his involvement had been uncovered. There is no evidence to support any particular interpretation, but it certainly affected the relationship between Pompey and Cicero. Clodius drew closer to Pompey, presumably briefing against Cicero, who reported a cooling in Pompey's affections towards him. Any hopes he cherished of drawing Pompey away from Caesar were now dashed.

Having achieved so much in such difficult circumstances, Caesar now looked to the future. His continuation of business through 59 in defiance of the sacred period declared by Bibulus was, arguably, technically illegal, which would make him vulnerable to prosecution when his *imperium* lapsed. While he was secure for the next five years, his enemies would always have a sword to dangle over his head and from this point onwards the maintenance of *imperium* would always be his priority. Caesar needed immediate and also ongoing support if his political career was to be secure, but he was concerned about the sticking power of his fellow Triumvirs. Crassus clearly felt sidelined and Pompey was now extremely unpopular, which he found difficult to bear. As they had both achieved their objectives, the two men had no need to support Caesar further.

Caesar had divorced Pompeia after the Bona Dea affair and now married Calpurnia, the daughter of Lucius Calpurnius Piso, who became his favoured candidate for the consulship of 58; he would need important friends when he departed for his provinces. Caesar also had high hopes of Clodius, who returned to his original support of the Triumvirs after the elections. He was generally perceived as their tool and appears to have realised that working with, rather than against, powerful men would enhance his own power. Caesar must have been concerned about Clodius' attitude to Cicero. He offered Cicero a post on his staff which he turned down, writing to Atticus (2.18), 'running away doesn't appeal to me. I want to fight. I have plenty of support'. Cicero had largely remained detached from politics during the Triumvirate, and had concluded that the regime could not be opposed because it was a *dominatio*, the relationship between a slave and a master. He was equally dispirited by the behaviour of the senators, lamenting their failure to cultivate and safeguard *concordia ordinum* and pained by their attacks on the *equites*. Cicero had separated himself from both Triumvirs and Senate in 59.

The only practical achievement of Bibulus during 59 had been to delay the consular elections, which were eventually held on 18 October. The Vettius affair had revived the flagging fortunes of Pompey, and the elections reflected a swing back to the Triumvirs. The two new consuls were Calpurnius Piso, Caesar's new father-in-law, and Gabinius, the friend of Pompey who had

secured his extraordinary command in 67. This must have greatly annoyed Crassus, who now threw his weight behind the prosecution of Gabinius for *ambitus*, electoral corruption, which had been proposed by Cato. It seems likely Crassus recruited Gaius Porcius Cato for the task, 'a young man of no common sense but a Roman citizen and a Cato nonetheless', according to Cicero (*Q. fr.* 1.2). In a public meeting C. Cato called Pompey an unofficial dictator and, although this tactic would have won support during the summer, the mood had changed so far in Pompey's favour that C. Cato was lucky to escape the baying mob.

Caesar was now preparing to go to his province and the military glory he craved. He must have hoped that his future achievements would be sufficient to cancel out memories of the irregularities of his consulship. Having failed to sidetrack Pompey, Crassus now turned back towards Caesar, who appreciated that he would need all the friends he could get while he was away, and when he left in March 58 Caesar was accompanied by Crassus' son Publius, a tangible sign of a continuing link between them.

THE ROAD TO LUCA, 58–56

‘Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world’: Clodius, 58

In 58 Rome experienced a tribunate with a difference. Publius Clodius Pulcher had decided to use the office of tribune and his popularity with the plebs as an alternative route to power and he introduced a level of intimidation into politics that had not been witnessed before. The Senate had no resources or strategies to counter the threat this posed to the Republic and it presaged a period of escalating violence and intimidation within the political and judicial processes and on the streets. Clodius prevented Bibulus, who had finally emerged from his villa, from speaking at the ceremonial oath-taking which concluded his consulship and Dio (38.12) records that ‘Clodius silenced him and then went on to make an attack on Cicero’. This episode is important for two reasons. Clodius’ attack on Bibulus demonstrated his support of the Triumvirate, and his attack on Cicero, who was now ‘a burden and trial to others’, and had lost a lot of support because he was an ‘incomparable boaster’ (*ibid.*), made it clear that Clodius had him in his sights. Unfortunately none of Cicero’s letters remain from this period and we do not have his own views on the events which would culminate in his exile.

Clodius immediately put forward four Bills, all of which were passed without opposition. Dio (38.13) argued that his programme was aimed at winning over the plebs but also had appeal for the *equites* and senators; it had been carefully constructed to ensure that Clodius, the ‘patrician’ tri-bune, acquired unimpeachable *popularis* credentials without alienating the political establishment. His first measure concerned the legalisation of the *collegia*. These were religious and social organisations, usually based on shared occupations or localities, and the main centres of leisure in the poorer districts of the city, taking charge of certain festivals and working to the members’ mutual benefit under the leadership of elected officials. Membership of *collegia* was voluntary, but for a modest membership fee they provided a social focus and benefits such as funeral clubs. *Collegia* were greatly valued by the lower classes and varied in size from a hundred to over a thousand members. They were important also to the political life of the city; Tatum (1999: 26) writes, ‘the political potential of *collegia*, especially for winning popular support, was no secret in Rome’. Cicero had been well aware of their importance and had carefully followed the advice in the *Handbook on Electioneering* (30), ‘if you establish a friendship with the leading men of the *collegia*, then, through them, you will easily secure the remainder of the masses’. After a series of violent incidents the Senate had banned certain *collegia* in 64, claiming they were subversive and hostile to the state. They had also banned the Ludi Compitalicii, games celebrated after the Saturnalia in honour of the gods of the crossroads and organised by the *collegia*.

Clodius had built up a strong political network among the newest citizens and the first law he promulgated, the *lex de collegiis*, legalised and

reestablished the banned *collegia*. New *collegia* were also set up which often attracted those who had previously been unable to join because they could not afford the subscriptions. These organisations required patrons, and Clodius and his closest followers obliged, forging links with the grateful *collegia* which later provided Clodius with the gangs with which he terrorised his rivals and sabotaged political life. Lintott (1999: 196) argues that Clodius 'wanted the city mob as a permanent source of power' and 'pursued urban political power as an end in itself'. In this he differed from prominent *populares* of the past who had used the *plebs urbana* for more limited political objectives.

To bind the *plebs* more closely to him Clodius granted a free monthly ration of 5 *modii* of grain to all those aged ten and above. Fluctuations in food prices were common in Rome. Most of the grain consumed came from Sicily, Sardinia and Africa and practices had developed piecemeal to ensure its correct storage, shipment and sale. Intervention had first come in the 120s when Gaius Gracchus had passed the *lex frumentaria* during his tribunate which had subsidised the price and introduced a ration to stabilise price volatility. This practice was expensive and Sulla had abolished the grain dole during his dictatorship, although it had been restored by the *lex Terentia et Cassia* in 73. The costs to the Treasury had increased significantly since 62 when Cato had passed an additional measure in response to the economic distress of the time to assist the 'poor and landless masses' (Plutarch, *Cato* 26). Clodius' grant of free grain certainly trumped all previous reforms. Tatum (1999: 121) comments, 'Clodius' law was welcome to all divisions of the *plebs urbana* and won him the people's lasting devotion'. It seems likely that the *collegia* were used for grain distribution which further enhanced their influence. Estimates differ on the precise cost of this policy but a new coin had to be minted in 58 to pay for it and funds were diverted from the new province of Cyprus to contribute to the costs.

Clodius next championed the *lex Aelia*, a Bill which provided much needed clarification of the use of public omens and sacred periods to disrupt the legitimate business of government. The observation, *spectio*, and reporting, *obnuntiatio*, of unfavourable omens in person, was carefully defined in the new law. Bibulus' behaviour in 59 had demonstrated inherent problems in the existing system, therefore Clodius' law faced little resistance; the potential danger of Bibulus' tactics must have been clear to all, friend and foe. The law was not made retrospective so the issue of Caesar's legislation and its legality remained untouched. In an ironical twist, the villain of the Bona Dea affair had become the defender of religion.

A fourth measure put forward by Clodius, the *lex Clodia de censoria notione*, concerned the revision of the senatorial roll. This was normally carried out by the censors who could expel senators by reading out their names from a list without any opportunity of appeal or self-defence; sixty four senators had been expelled in this way in 70. Clodius' law stated that no

senator could be expelled unless both censors agreed and it could be done only after those named had an opportunity to respond. It has been generally accepted that Clodius put forward this law to make it difficult for the Senate to expel him in future although Cicero insisted he was attempting to neutralise the censors. The Bill had considerable support among the senators who felt the procedures had been unjust and that it introduced a much-needed element of dignity to the proceedings which had been lacking. The law was passed but proved unworkable and was removed in 52 as the hearings in 54 were too many and too lengthy.

Atticus had returned to Rome to support Cicero personally in 58 and their customary flow of letters was suspended; lacking these personal insights we are, therefore, largely dependent on later sources to examine this period. Cicero was completely unconvinced by Pompey's assurances that Clodius would leave him alone and decided to nip his activities in the bud. Dio (38.14) writes that Cicero used a tribune, Ninnius, to block Clodius' measures. The four Bills had been well received by the plebs, but also by the Senate, and Cicero feared Clodius' growing popularity. Clodius planned to revive the *Ludi Compitalicii*, due to be held on 1 January, to underline his own role in the restoration of the *collegia* and revel in his resulting popularity. Ninnius hoped to scupper the joyful celebrations and appeared in person to insist that the prohibition of 64 be upheld. He cut an embarrassingly ineffectual figure in the face of Clodius' vehement opposition and backed down, but Clodius knew Ninnius could employ his veto at any time and appealed to Cicero to restrain him in return for his guarantee to leave Cicero alone. Cicero agreed, although why he was prepared to accept Clodius' word when he had not accepted the reassurances of Pompey remains a mystery. It is possible Cicero had been persuaded by some third party, possibly Cato or Hortensius, attempting to draw Cicero away from Pompey by giving personal assurances about Clodius' future conduct.

Caesar had still not departed for Gaul. The praetors of 58, Memmius and Ahenobarbus, had attempted to launch an immediate inquiry into his measures of 59 but three days of unproductive and bitterly critical debate had been inconclusive. Caesar had then left the city and crossed the *pomerium*, thereby assuming proconsular *imperium* which protected him from further prosecutions, and had continued with his military preparations while observing from the sidelines a court case involving one of his quaestors whose name has been lost. The charge was that the measures taken by Caesar during 59 had been illegal. Although this particular case came to nothing, Caesar's enemies were demonstrating that they considered there was a legal issue to address and that he would eventually be called upon to account personally for the irregularities of his consulship, however long it took. Shortly afterwards one of the tribunes, Antistius, attempted to bring a case against Caesar himself. Suetonius (23) writes that Caesar appealed to all the tribunes against this attack 'on the ground that he was absent on public service'. Caesar then

‘took great pains always to put the magistrates for the year under personal obligation, and not to aid any candidates or suffer any to be elected, except those who guaranteed to defend him in his absence’.

In March Vatinius, tribune in 59, was accused of breaking procedure in the passage of his laws, another attempt to implicate Caesar by association. Vatinius had entered the city to declare his candidature for the aedileship and now called upon Clodius for support against these charges. It was a pivotal moment. If Clodius lent his support to Vatinius he was also showing support for the Triumvirate and could lose the goodwill of those senators who had backed his earlier measures; Clodius took that risk. He brought his supporters to the trial where they created havoc, upturned benches, broke vases and wrecked the proceedings. Clodius had used his growing power base in defence of another tribune, the first time he employed such a tactic, and Vatinius was able to leave the city unchallenged. Tatum (1999: 141) concludes, ‘the demonstration that erupted at Vatinius’ trial was the first sign that the *lex de collegiis* and *lex frumentaria* had procured the tribune not only unprecedented *popularitas* but also a mechanism that could rally vocal and violent demonstrations whenever required’. In his account of the trial, *In Vatinium* (40), Cicero wrote of the *Clodiani*, Clodius’ ‘following’. There were members of the re-established *collegia*, probably artisans and shopkeepers, although some would have been poorer labourers and the unemployed from his new *collegia*. Cicero fulminated against them and suggested they had become a paramilitary organisation in the city trained to follow the bidding of Clodius. This is unlikely. Clodius courted the popularity of the plebs and wanted easy access to ‘muscle’ but the evidence does not exist that he had a master plan to create a private army. The Clodiani were organised into *decuriae*, each led by *duces*, but they were largely untrained and unarmed; stones and fists are far more likely to have been their weapons of choice. Cicero also alleged that Clodius took over the Temple of Castor from which he launched his operations but this was a traditional point in the Forum for holding meetings and it is much more likely it just became a gathering place for Clodius’ followers.

Cicero liked to portray Clodius as the successor of Catiline and had already alleged this during the Bona Dea trial and in its aftermath, but Clodius’ power lay in the urban mob and Catiline had largely attracted rural support. The group surrounding Clodius was large and inevitably some had been associates of Catiline, but this does not prove a link between the two men. Clodius had been a staunch supporter of Murena during the consular elections of 63 against Catiline and was clearly implicated in the *ambitus* with which Murena was later charged. The methods of Catiline and Clodius also differed. Clodius was exploiting the tradition in Roman politics of popular protest which had always existed and he was able to martial it using the *collegia* to coordinate public violence in defence of his own interests. This was not the violent revolution Catiline had planned but its power was all the greater for being

well organised and never far from the surface. There is no proven link between Clodius and Catiline in 63 and Cicero's later allegations must be seen as without foundation.

Sic transit gloriosus: the exile of Cicero

In late January or early February Clodius proposed a Bill which allocated wealthy provinces to the two consuls. Calpurnius Piso was to go to Macedonia, Gabinius to Cilicia, and they were granted five-year commands. Mitchell (1991: 129) writes, 'his pact with the consuls was a vital step in his rise to power, removing the most powerful potential source of official opposition to his designs and the main vehicle for the implementation of any senatorial moves against him'. A second Bill reneged on Clodius' recent agreement with Cicero. It proposed to punish by exile any magistrate who executed or had executed any Roman citizen without allowing them to stand trial, and it reasserted the right of *provocatio*, all but synonymous with freedom to the Romans. No names were included but the target was transparent. Cicero had been an outspoken critic of the Triumvirate which Clodius now appeared to serve, but he was also the object of *ultio*, revenge. Clodius had been looking for an opportunity for retribution ever since Cicero had disproved his alibi in the Bona Dea trial and that time had come. When Cicero, by the authority of the SCU, executed the Catilinarian conspirators without a trial, he laid himself open to attack. The scope of the SCU had already been questioned in the trial of Rabirius and the tri-bune Metellus Nepos had refused to allow Cicero to make his valedictory speech as consul of 63 because he had put citizens to death without a trial. Although it could be argued that the perpetrators of such treason were no longer citizens but *hostes*, political enemies, there was a lack of clarity which was exactly what Clodius now exploited.

Cicero appealed to the consuls for help, but he was to be disappointed. Piso was anticipating the profits of Macedonia, so recently granted to him by Clodius, and he was also Caesar's father-in-law. He did not want to rock any boats by backing Cicero, therefore he 'advised him to leave before there was trouble' (Dio. 38.14). Gabinius was supportive of Clodius, which greatly alarmed Cicero as he was also a close associate of Pompey, and Seagar (2002: 102) concludes, 'Pompeius had finally decided to sacrifice Cicero'. If Pompey was alarmed by the growing power of Clodius he would have been loath to resist him on this matter and his hope may have been to work for Cicero's recall after the tribunate. Dio writes that Cicero 'had no previous suspicion of Pompey and was quite confident of being rescued by him' (*ibid.*) His disappointment was profound as Pompey had repeatedly assured Cicero that he was safe from Clodius' taunts; now he had changed his tune. Cicero responded to the attack by going into mourning, growing his hair and beard and wearing tattered clothing. This was a behaviour often adopted by men facing trial and Plutarch (*Cicero* 31) writes that 20,000 young *equites* copied him as a demonstration of their support. Clodius' men harassed Cicero on the streets and 'made many unbridled jests about Cicero's change of attire, and

often pelted him with mud and stones' (*Cicero* 30). The tribune Ninnius proposed that the Senate show Cicero solidarity and attempted to pass a vote that 'the people should change their dress in token of public calamity' (*ibid.*), but this was fiercely opposed by the consuls, and when the *Clodiani* surrounded the Senate House the senators dispersed in chaos. Caesar, who was still outside the city walls, agreed to appear at a public meeting in the Circus Flaminius, normally used for chariot racing. He had spoken out against the death penalty during the debate in December 63 and now repeated his arguments, but added that he did not accept legislation should be retrospective, which was as close as Caesar came to defending Cicero. Caesar renewed his offer to employ him on his staff in Gaul but Cicero again refused and he also rejected a proposal by the Senate to travel abroad on their behalf.

The senators must have had some concerns that the new law attacking Cicero, a symbol of senatorial authority, presaged a more general attack on them as a body and could also be used to implicate others. The next most likely target was Cato who was an outspoken critic of Clodius and whose speech had been so influential during the Catilinarian debate. Clodius now dispelled any such fears and passed the *lex Clodia de imperio Catonis*, which gave Cato the task of annexing Cyprus with *propraetorian imperium*. A politician of Cato's present rank, he had only been a quaestor, would not normally have been selected for such an important commission and sending Cato was a masterstroke. Clodius was making it clear that Cicero alone was the target of his law. Cato was to be honoured not attacked. It also removed from the city another potentially critical voice but cleverly tied Cato into the legislative programme of 58; he would never be free to challenge something from which he had personally benefited. Cyprus had been part of the bequest to Rome of Ptolemy Alexander I who had died in 87. Possession of the island was in line with the Triumvirs' policy towards Egypt, completed Pompey's work in the Eastern Mediterranean and protected the sea route to Syria. It was to be administered by the governor of Cilicia. Cato encountered no military resistance, did an excellent job and made no personal profit from the office. Plutarch (*Cato* 34) concluded that Clodius intended 'to keep Cato out of the way for as long as possible while he was tribune'. Cato was highly respected by the ordinary people of Rome, and his popularity challenged the ascendancy of Clodius, but he was also a critic of Caesar; his removal from Rome at this point served the interests of both men. When Cato returned in 56, his critical voice had been noticeably absent for nearly two years.

The removal of Cato greatly alarmed Cicero who now held a crisis meeting in his home. He was starting to believe his position was untenable. Not only was he facing attacks by the *Clodiani*, but the anticipated wave of support from the Senate had failed to materialise. Some senators were enjoying the predicament and discomfiture of the *novus homo* who had reminded them so frequently of his achievements, others had links with the Claudii and pedigree always trumped loyalty in such circumstances. Cato's new role in Cyprus had

reassured many that Cicero alone would pay the price for the decisions of 5 December 63 and Hortensius, who had also been attacked by Clodius' men, and the other senior optimates present at the meeting advised Cicero to leave. They promised to work for his early recall but no one was prepared to take on Clodius. Cicero went to Pompey's magnificent villa in the Alban hills to plead with him in person but Pompey 'could not endure to see him'. Plutarch (*Cicero* 31) insists this was due to Pompey's links with his father-in-law; 'at his [Caesar's] request he proved false to his old obligations'. Whatever Pompey's reasons, Cicero had served him well and had good reason to expect more; it was a bitter blow.

It was probably mid-March when Cicero slipped away from the city he loved so much, but not before he had taken his favourite statue of Minerva to the top of the Capitol and asked the goddess to protect Rome during his absence. He left on foot and at night to avoid any unwanted attention from Clodius' thugs. His intention had been to travel to Sicily but it was not to be. Clodius followed up his original Bill with another which named Cicero specifically. He was to be refused 'fire and water' and was not to live within a 400-mile radius of Italy.¹ Cicero went to Greece and eventually settled at Thessalonica, living comfortably in the official residence of the quaestor, Plancius, who was a friend, and subsidised by Atticus who had given him 250,000 sesterces. Cicero's own property had been confiscated and Clodius took enormous pleasure in organising the demolition of his house on the Palatine. He removed the adjacent Portico of Catulus and rebuilt it on such a scale that it extended onto the site of Cicero's former home and then erected an elaborate shrine to Liberty. Cicero's country villas at Tusculum and Formiae were also destroyed but, although Clodius put the rest of his property up for auction and advertised it every day, 'no one would buy anything' (Plutarch, *Cicero* 33).

At more or less the same time as Cicero left the city, Caesar set off for his proconsular command; he would not return to Rome for nine years. His own role in seeking Cicero's exile is controversial. The affair conveniently prevented further attempts to prosecute Caesar and his supporters but also removed a man who had openly spoken out against the Triumvirate and had rebuffed their attempts to draw him in. Mitchell (1991: 132) argues that Clodius was working closely for the Triumvirs in 58 identifying 'a catalogue of mutual favour that must surely have issued from a positive agreement for mutual cooperation'. Velleius argued (2.45) that the exile 'had more than a hint that Caesar and Pompey were responsible', and Plutarch insisted (*Cicero* 30) that Caesar 'completely alienated Pompey from him [Cicero]', which could suggest Pompey had been forced to choose between his father-in-law and his friend. Lintott (1999: 192) disagrees, concluding that 'Clodius was a man who trusted in his own strength and whose bonds with the coalition were elastic and stretched near breaking point'. Although Caesar's job offer to Cicero could have been an attempt to spare him further humiliation by a

vengeful Clodius who was actually working on Caesar's behalf, it could have been genuine. If Cicero had accepted it would have achieved the same result; the removal of a powerful and potentially critical voice from the city.

Cicero suffered greatly and experienced something approaching a total mental breakdown during his exile, brooding alone and rejecting the help and company of others. Plutarch (*Cicero* 32) wrote that he kept his eyes, 'like a disconsolate lover', fixed on Italy, 'his spirit was not enough to rise above his misfortunes'. Mitchell (1991: 142) concludes that his exile 'laid in ruins his proud conception of himself as a uniquely gifted *princeps* who, by *virtus* and *industria*, had won his way from obscurity to the highest limits of *dignitas*, *auctoritas* and *gratia*'. Cicero began to believe he should not have left the city voluntarily and criticised those who had given him that advice, including Atticus. He blamed the Senate for their lack of support, insisting there had been envy behind their apparently kind words and that his betrayal was the culmination of their jealousy. He bitterly concluded to Atticus (3.9), 'it was not enemies but jealous friends who ruined me'.

‘Inexperienced in this sort of warfare’: Pompey and Clodius

The decision to send Cato to Cyprus interfered with the terms of Pompey’s Eastern Settlement and marked a new stage in Clodius’s tribunate. Clodius had been disappointed by Pompey’s lack of support during the Bona Dea affair and had been waiting for a chance to get his own back but was also looking for a way to repair any damage his attack on Cicero had done to his own relationship with the senatorial aristocracy, most of whom greatly resented the pre-eminence of Pompey. Clodius now sought to renew the optimate challenge to Pompey that had been thwarted by the formation of the Triumvirate, as Tatum (1999: 187) writes, ‘jealousy being a law of oligarchy every bit as reliable as the principles of physics’.

Clodius now put forward a Bill which undermined one of the provisions of the Eastern Settlement. Pompey had made King Deiotarus of Galatia a client king and had recognised him as high priest of the goddess Magna Mater at Pessinus in gratitude for his loyalty to Rome. Clodius proposed to remove this honour and transfer it to Deiotarus’ son-in-law, Brogitarus, who was now recognised as king, ally and friend of Rome. The episode was embarrassing to Pompey as it challenged the arrangements made in Galatia and showed the Eastern Settlement was vulnerable. Clodius then went further. When he restored Tigranes to the throne of Armenia Pompey had taken his son as a political hostage and he was living in considerable comfort at the home of Pompey’s friend, Flavius, praetor in 58. According to Asconius (*Commentary on the Pro Milone* 47), Clodius invited himself to dinner at Flavius’ house and abducted the young Tigranes. All Pompey’s appeals for his return were ignored and Clodius arranged to send him back to Armenia. Bad weather intervened and Tigranes’ ship was forced to put in at Antium so Clodius sent his right-hand man Cloelius to pick him up. When Flavius learned of the arrangement, he also set off for Antium and the two groups clashed violently on the Appian Way where, among others, one of Pompey’s equestrian friends, Papirius, was killed. The fate of the young Tigranes himself is not recorded.

Clodius had no authority to carry out such a scheme and the consul Gabinius, who had been so cooperative over the matter of Cicero’s exile, now turned on him. Gabinius was a friend of Pompey’s and he gathered his own men around him and launched a stinging attack on Clodius. The *Clodiani* retaliated, there was violence in the Forum, and they broke the consul’s *fascēs* and seized his property, behaviour most unlikely to get Clodius back into the Senate’s good books. Pompey was becoming increasingly frustrated, ‘especially as Clodius was using against him the authority which he personally restored to the tribunes’. He decided that Cicero should be recalled and ‘immediately set in motion the wheels for his restoration through

Ninnius' (Dio 38.30). The tribune proposed a motion to this effect to the Senate on 1 June but it was immediately vetoed by another tribune, Ligus, later described by Cicero as, 'that excrescence from the ranks of my enemies' (*Pro Sestio* 67). Cicero believed his cause was hopeless and his letters from this period are filled with recriminations and despair, which makes it difficult to examine effectively those efforts being made to recall him. His son-in-law, Gaius Piso, had not gone to a province but had remained in Rome and was working on his behalf and the *equites* started to hold meetings in Cicero's support. By July Pompey was giving assurances to Atticus of his goodwill but he remained behind the scenes, possibly not wishing to antagonise Caesar, who might not share his desire for the orator's speedy return.

Despite Cicero's pessimism, his prospects of being recalled in 57 did seem brighter. Although Metellus Nepos, Cicero's old enemy, had been elected consul, Lentulus Spinther was his colleague. He had been a supportive aedile during 63 and was well inclined towards Cicero. Two of the new tribunes, Publius Sestius and Titus Annius Milo, were also supportive, although Clodius' older brother Appius was to be one of the praetors. Clodius was determined to prevent Cicero's recall and, with the co-operation of Bibulus, announced that he was going to challenge Caesar's legislation of 59, a threat designed to prevent Caesar giving his own support to Cicero. He used a cruder tactic with Pompey and, when he was due to attend the Senate on 11 August 'a servant of Clodius, stealing along through the crowd of bystanders towards Pompey, was found to have a sword in his hand' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 48). Pompey took his own personal safety seriously, as the Vettius affair had demonstrated, and his reaction was immediate. He returned home and remained there for the rest of the year; the hero of the East appeared at best afraid, at worst cowardly. This behaviour must have delighted many senators, torn between apprehension of Clodius and an enjoyable dose of Schadenfreude. No investigation was proposed, there was no censure of Clodius, and no wave of sympathy for Pompey's plight. He was forced to barricade himself in as Clodius' gang, led by his freedman Damio, laid siege to Pompey's house on the Carinae, one of Rome's hills. Clodius had successfully forged a link with some of the leading optimates, evidenced by his recent co-operation with Bibulus, and had played on their fears of Pompey; when they chose Clodius as the lesser of two evils, he was able to reassert control.

It was clear to Pompey that Cicero was an asset he urgently needed in Rome. His assurances of support were genuine, but so was his desire to remain aligned with Caesar. A tribune, Culleo, suggested that he divorce Julia 'and exchange the friendship of Caesar for that of the Senate', but Pompey would not listen. He was determined to bring back Cicero, 'who was the greatest enemy of Clodius and most beloved in the Senate' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 48). A Bill to recall Cicero was promulgated by eight of the tribunes in late October which Cicero himself was rather scathing about. After this attempt

failed, the tribune-elect, Sestius, visited Caesar in November to elicit his views and Caesar agreed to back Cicero's recall on condition he did not challenge the measures of 59. In Rome the consulelect, Metellus Nepos, was won over to Cicero's cause by the arguments of Pompey and Spinther and the lobbying of Atticus. He declared he would not oppose the orator's recall, which would make it considerably easier to steer the proposal through the Senate.

Events quickly gathered pace as the new political year opened. One of the tribunes, Messius, a close friend of Pompey, immediately brought forward a Bill supported by seven other tribunes, including the very enthusiastic Fabricius, and backed by Spinther. The eminent jurist Lucius Cotta gave his opinion that a decree of the Senate was sufficient to recall Cicero but Pompey, who had returned to the Senate for the debate, insisted a Bill was essential to safeguard Cicero's future position. Clodius had already secured the services of another tribune, Serranus, who now demanded a night to consider whether he should exercise his veto and the senators reluctantly agreed. Cicero's fears that Clodius' powers would not be curtailed when his office ended appeared to have substance; his hand was clearly visible and was still extremely powerful. On 25 January Fabricius, another tribune, Cispus, and Quintus Cicero came to the Forum before daybreak accompanied by their friends and supporters. It was the day the Bill was to be put to the vote and they possibly intended to occupy the Rostra to prevent Clodius using Serranus to veto the Bill. Clodius was one step ahead of them. He had brought his *Clodiani*, reinforced by a group of gladiators who had recently taken part in funeral games he had organised, and 'in the dead of night they took over the Forum' (Cicero, *Pro Sestio* 75–6). The clash was violent and bloody, the worst of many such episodes, and Quintus Cicero barely escaped with his life as he was dragged from the Rostra. He was left among the corpses in the Forum and for a while was believed to be dead. Cicero was graphic in his description of the events, reminding the jurors at Sestius' trial in 56 how 'the river Tiber was filled with the bodies of citizens, how the sewers were choked, and how the blood was wiped up from the Forum with sponges' (*Pro Sestio* 77). Violence was becoming commonplace, particularly after a controversial measure had been proposed, but 'who has ever heard of a riot erupting in the middle of the night without a word being spoken?' Cicero placed the blame fully on 'that plague-ridden and accursed Clodius' (*ibid.*).

Milo, one of the tribunes, had arrested many of the gladiators involved in the attack on 25 January and closely questioned them in the Senate but they were freed when Serranus interposed his veto. Milo subsequently faced daily intimidation as he walked around the city and his home was attacked by Clodius' gangs. When Milo attempted to prosecute Clodius for his behaviour, he was prevented by the intervention of a consul, Nepos, a praetor, Appius, and a tribune, Serranus: Clodius had important friends. Milo turned in disgust from the courts and began to organise his own forces. A few weeks later there

was a violent attack on Sestius, who had attempted to intervene in a public meeting being held by Metellus Nepos at the Temple of Castor. According to Cicero (*Pro Sestio* 79), ‘suddenly the Clodian gang, with many bloody victories to its credit, interrupted him, caused a disturbance, and attacked him ... Severely wounded, his body hacked about and weakened by loss of blood, he threw himself to the ground as though dead’. Even allowing for the dramatic licence of a defence speech, it is not surprising that Sestius also started to collect men around him and, during his trial in 56, Cicero argued that, where *ius*, law, and *iudicia*, justice, cannot find a place, *vis*, force, is the only alternative (92). Clodius’ use of bloody force went too far for many of those in the Senate who had, up to now, largely enjoyed his attacks on Pompey, but the situation had changed. The tribunes Milo and Sestius were both funded by senators who despaired at Clodius’ increasingly violent behaviour and they had access to slaves, freedmen, clients and gladiators; Pompey even brought men from his own estates to increase their number and gave his support to Milo. These were a different type of thug, better armed and more efficiently organised than Clodius’ rough-and-ready street gangs; they were ready to take on the *Clodiani*. Although Clodius remained undaunted, and street violence took firm root in the city, his power was blunted and he was never again able to exert the level of control he had possessed during his tribunate.

The recall of Cicero had become inevitable. Caesar had finally given it his full support, possibly realising that Clodius was beyond his control, and Pompey worked indefatigably on Cicero’s behalf, travelling from city to city to plead his cause. The mood in Rome had swung towards the orator, and ‘Clodius’ vendetta against Cicero, once tolerable, even welcome in certain quarters, was moving beyond the pale of acceptable hatred’ (Tatum 1999: 181). In May 57 the Senate voted for his recall and, although Spinther and other senators were greeted with rapturous cheers at the Ludi Florales, Clodius was subjected to jeers and obscene gestures and driven away by an angry mob. In early July Pompey planned to make his definitive announcement about Cicero’s recall at the Ludi Apollinares but Clodius, who still retained much support among the urban plebs, managed to disrupt the proceedings with food riots which stole Pompey’s thunder. Milo’s supporters intervened and fended off further physical attacks, leaving Clodius powerless to prevent Cicero’s recall. When the vote was taken in the Senate, 417 senators voted to recall Cicero and only one voted against; ‘whatever else he was, Clodius was no coward’ (Seagar 2002: 107).

Cicero had awaited the outcome of the vote with a mixture of trepidation and elation. He had moved on from Thessalonica to Dyrrachium, a port only a few days’ journey from Brundisium, but finally accepted all would be well even before the vote was taken. He arrived in Brundisium on the Nones of August, where a festival was in full swing. He was rapturously received by the townspeople and his recently widowed daughter Tullia, and started his

journey through Italy to Rome. Cicero's reception in the towns through which he passed was joyful, and Plutarch (*Cicero* 33) records Cicero's own comment that 'Italy had taken him on her shoulders and carried him into Rome'. He reached the city on 4 September and entered a Forum and Capitol filled with well-wishers and supporters. Cicero's return after sixteen months of exile was as close to a Triumph as any non-military man could hope for.

Cicero's first speech on his return to the Senate lambasted those who had stood by and allowed his exile, such as Gabinius and Calpurnius Piso. He praised Pompey fulsomely, and embarked on a policy designed to detach Pompey from Caesar permanently. Problems with the food supply gave Cicero an immediate opportunity, as grain was in extremely short supply and prices were very high. Cicero blamed Clodius' new grain doles for the crisis while he in turn blamed the crowds in Rome that had gathered to celebrate Cicero's return; bad harvests and price manipulation by middlemen were probably the main reasons. Prices rocketed for those who were not on the distribution lists and there were attacks by the plebs on the theatres and also on the Senate which had to suspend business in early September. Although these activities were probably initiated by Clodius, he found himself unable to control his followers, and the name of Pompey was uttered throughout the city as the only man who could save the situation.

Cicero proposed that a special commission should be established to tackle the shortages, as grain needed to be urgently procured and regulated, and that it should be given to Pompey. Clodius insisted Pompey had engineered the crisis and rehearsed the old arguments about giving too much power to any one man that had been used in the 60s about the extraordinary commands. Clodius identified Cicero with the new power and criticised him for parading as a defender of the Republic but betraying it by handing power to a popular figure who was not even a magistrate. Despite the protests of Clodius, the consuls conferred on Pompey the title Curator of the Grain Supply and awarded him proconsular *imperium* for five years with fifteen legates to assist him. A more extreme authority similar to that of the *lex Manilia* was suggested but withdrawn after an outcry from the optimates. Pompey immediately rose to the challenge, always at his best in such a logistical task, dividing the Mediterranean among his legates and travelling to assist them whenever necessary. Cicero and his brother Quintus were both legates, although Cicero himself did nothing more than hold the title. Pompey showed his usual skill and panache, and 'he filled the sea with ships and the markets with grain' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 50). Much to the fury of Clodius, Pompey recovered that fragile popularity which the events of 59 and 58 had so seriously jeopardised.

Following his triumphant return Cicero spent the remainder of 57 attempting to recover his property. Clodius had demolished his mansion on the Palatine and declared the site sacred. As this was a religious matter the case was heard by the College of Pontiffs, where both Cicero and Clodius

spoke and indulged in personal attacks which were predictably acrimonious. Cicero's own speech, *De domo sua*, survives. Clodius' own standing with the Senate was extremely low at the end of the year and Cicero must have hoped that, even if he could not reclaim the site, he would be compensated for its loss. The matter was not straightforward, as no opposition had been raised when Clodius demolished Cicero's house and built the shrine to Liberty, but Cicero argued that there was no provision in the Bill which had exiled him for such a shrine; Clodius did not have the permission of the Roman people to dedicate it and therefore it could be removed. The Pontiffs agreed with Cicero and the Senate supported their decision despite a filibuster by Clodius and a last-ditch attempt by Serranus to veto it. Cicero's property was restored to him, the hated shrine could now be demolished and he could rebuild on his reclaimed piece of prime real estate. It was a bitter-sweet victory, however, as the level of compensation was set at less than half the 3.5 million sesterces Cicero had spent on the property. He bitterly complained to Atticus (4.2) that it was the work of fair-weather friends in the Senate who had 'clipped my wings but don't want to see them grow back to their old size'.

Clodius was infuriated by the verdict and lost whatever good judgement he possessed. An armed gang attacked the workmen on Cicero's building site and set fire to the nearby house of his brother Quintus. On 11 November Cicero described a personal attack to Atticus: 'as I was coming down the Sacred Way he came after me with his men. Uproar! Stones flying, cudgels and swords in evidence' (4.3). Although Cicero escaped into the house of a friend, Clodius had scented blood and the violence escalated. On the next day his men, armed with swords and shields, attacked the house of Milo but they were beaten back in a bloody clash and a number of Clodius' best men were killed. Nevertheless, Clodius' popularity with the plebs appeared to be intact and he also could count on support from some leading senators; this appalled Cicero, who now had little respect for many of his senatorial colleagues. Although Milo attempted to bring a prosecution to prevent Clodius standing for the aedileship, he failed; Clodius took office again in 56.

Breaking up and making up, 57–56

It could be argued that little now remained of the *amicitia* of Caesar, Pompey and Crassus. Even during Caesar's consulship of 59 their relationship had been seriously compromised by the marriage alliance between Julia and Pompey, which had sidelined Crassus. After their immediate demands had been met in 59 neither Crassus nor Pompey had needed the support of the other two and the hostility which had always marked their relationship resurfaced. Crassus had probably helped Clodius to undermine Pompey's position in Rome in 58 and their strained relationship had deteriorated further in the years following Caesar's departure to Gaul. Although Crassus had stepped back from the limelight, he had been circumspect about Clodius' attacks on Cicero. He recognised that Clodius could not be restrained and probably decided not to try, although Cicero clearly believed that Crassus was attempting to intercede on his behalf (*ad Att.* 2.22) and his son Publius Crassus was one of those who donned mourning clothes in his support. During his exile Crassus had remained on good terms with Cicero, and had suggested to his brother Quintus that Cicero seek the great man's support, and in August 58 Crassus sent one of his freedmen to visit the orator in exile. Cicero was suspicious of his motives but Atticus and Crassus remained in very close contact during his exile. When Cicero did re-enter the city on 4 September 57 Crassus had been one of the first to greet him, 'to gratify his son Publius, who was an ardent admirer of Cicero' (Plutarch, *Cicero* 33). Cicero's plan to unite Pompey with the optimates appealed to Crassus, as it would also drive a wedge between Caesar and Pompey, and he lent his support to Pompey's appointment as Controller of the Grain Supply.

Caesar still needed the support of powerful men in Rome if he was challenged for the irregularities of his consulship, but there seemed little to encourage either Pompey or Crassus to renew their *amicitia*, and their own relationship deteriorated further during 57. The Triumvirs had restored Ptolemy Auletes to the throne of Egypt in 59 but he had failed to prevent the annexation of Cyprus and the taxation demanded from the Egyptians to pay the Triumvirs for their help had led to rioting. Ptolemy Auletes was driven out by the Egyptians and fled to Pompey's Alban villa, where he had met a syndicate of bankers to organise a loan. The Senate instructed the consul Spinther, shortly to become governor of Cilicia, to organise the king's return to Egypt. At the same time a delegation of 100 men from Alexandria arrived in Rome led by the philosopher Dio. The Egyptians did not want Ptolemy back and had come to argue their case. Several members of the delegation were murdered, including Dio, but Pompey, who was suspected because of his links with Auletes, cleverly sidestepped a senatorial inquiry and drew up plans to restore Auletes to the throne himself; it was just the sort of troubleshooting in which he revelled and excelled.

Spinther was also eager for the commission, as Auletes had offered a large reward to the man who took it on successfully, but unfortunately, just as the matter came up for discussion, a statue of Jupiter on the Alban Mount in the city was struck by lightning. This was considered to be a bad omen and the Sibylline books, Rome's ancient prophetic writings, were consulted. A passage was discovered which suggested that, although Auletes could be restored to the throne, it should be done without the use of force. There were enough of Pompey's detractors in the Senate to make the most of this setback. The last thing they wanted was the great general at the head of another army, and they voted against him. In January 56 Crassus proposed that a three-man commission made up of those currently holding *imperium* be established to restore Auletes, a proposal which included Pompey as a possible commissioner. While appearing to be favourable to him this was an attempt on Crassus' part to clip Pompey's wings by removing him from the city and making him subject to the agreement of two others in Egypt. The subtlety of this proposal eluded Bibulus, who counter-proposed that the three commissioners should be men who did *not* hold *imperium*, a solution which was equally acceptable, as it would *exclude* Pompey from a task he was keen to undertake.

Pompey's involvement in the affairs of Egypt had started to dent his popularity and subsequent events made his position even worse. Clodius was aedile for 56 and immediately brought a charge of illegal violence against Milo, Pompey's associate, who had resisted his gangs so successfully during the previous year. Clodius chose to use his powers as aedile to try Milo before the people, a lengthy procedure rarely used. The trial began and on 7 February Pompey was called upon to speak in Milo's defence. Cicero described the scene in a long and detailed letter to Quintus on the subject (2.3). Pompey spoke well but he was heckled by Clodius and his cronies, who hurled verbal insults at him for about two hours. These were countered by salacious allegations of incest between Clodius and Clodia, his sister, from Milo's men. Clodius 'asked his followers, "Who is starving the people to death?" The gangs shouted back, "Pompey." "Who is eager to go to Alexandria?" "Pompey." "Who do you want to go to?" "Crassus"' (*ibid.*). The two groups of supporters came to blows and the proceedings broke up in chaos. The Senate met two days later and passed a decree 'that the events of 7 February had been contrary to the interests of the state'. C. Cato and other diehard optimates took the opportunity to harangue Pompey about various issues, in particular his failure to prevent Cicero's exile, and Cicero reached some interesting conclusions. 'C. Cato is being backed by Crassus, funds are being provided for Clodius, and both are being supported by Curio and Bibulus and Pompey's other opponents.' Pompey also saw the hand of Crassus behind Clodius' attacks and felt extremely vulnerable. Cicero wrote, 'He has almost lost the support of the people; the nobility hate him; the Senate won't give him their support, and the younger generation of politicians are

behaving disgracefully. So Pompey is making his own preparations and summoning men from the country. Clodius is also strengthening his gangs' (*ibid.*).

The violence in Rome was escalating and so was Cicero's case load, and another prosecution began on 10 February. Sestius was on trial, accused of organising a riot during 57, another attempt to attack Pompey through one of his supporters. Cicero spoke for the defence and Pompey gave evidence on Sestius' behalf, nodding in agreement as Cicero launched an attack on Vatinius, the tribune who had worked for Caesar during 59 and now testified against Sestius. Cicero took the opportunity of the trial to defend the optimates who, he argued, had always safeguarded those elements which had made Rome great:

Fear of the gods, the auspices, the powers of the magistrates, the prestige of the Senate, the laws, the traditions of our ancestors, criminal and civil jurisdiction, financial credit, our provinces, our allies, the glory of our empire, the army and the treasury.

(*Pro Sestio* 98)

He lamented those who pursued, 'civil strife and insurrection' (*Pro Sestio* 99), tarring all *populares* with the same brush, but reserving his venom for Clodius, 'that arch-criminal and dagger man' (*Pro Sestio* 107). Both Milo and Sestius were acquitted, but on 3 April another associate of Pompey, Marcus Caelius Rufus, was put on trial for the murder of the philosopher Dio. If he had been convicted some of the mud would have stuck to Pompey, but he too was acquitted after Cicero turned his defence into an attack on Clodia, the sister of Clodius, the discarded lover of Caelius, whom Cicero accused of bringing the case out of a desire for revenge. The verdict did little to revive Pompey's flagging popularity and, although he was able to secure an additional grant of funds for his work on the grain supply in early April, he appeared increasingly isolated. There was very little holding the Triumvirate together and recent events had clearly widened the rift between Crassus and Pompey.

Caesar had been fully occupied since his departure from Rome in March 57. Gaul was made up of disparate Celtic tribes which operated independently of each other and therefore made the area vulnerable to attack and invasion. Caesar's campaign in Gaul had begun with the defeat of the Helvetii, a migrating tribe from northern Switzerland who had attempted to settle in Gaul, and he had then driven the Suebi, a Germanic tribe, out of Gaul and back across the Rhine. As neither tribe had settled in Gaul before Caesar attacked them, his justifications for intervention must be seen as dubious. Rome's increasing influence in Gaul had galvanised the northern tribes, the Belgae, and Caesar was engaged in an ongoing campaign against them; he

needed time to complete his conquest. During his Gallic campaign Caesar wrote the *Commentaries*, an exciting narrative account of battles fought in defence of the Republic, always referring to himself in the third person, but as we have only Caesar's own version of these events they must be treated with some caution. The seven *Commentaries* on the war in Gaul were, primarily, works of propaganda, produced to raise Caesar's profile in Rome and win widespread support for his activities. It is likely that he produced a book a year, written at the end of the campaigning season, and that each one was circulated in Rome. Even if this was not the case and all the *Commentaries* were written later, Caesar's annual report to the Senate would have made his activities widely known in the city.

Early in 56, Domitius Ahenobarbus, consular candidate for 55 and Cato's brother-in-law, announced that he planned to recall Caesar and prosecute him for the alleged illegalities of 59. Cicero added fuel to the fire by suggesting that the *lex Campana* should also be discussed with a view to cancellation, and a date was set for the debate. Caesar was running out of time and *imperium*, and the situation in Gaul was far from resolution. He was not yet the conquering hero he had planned to become and his enemies in Rome were baying for his blood. Caesar needed important backers, and to regroup with Pompey and Crassus was the obvious solution. Crassus had worked hard to drive a wedge between Caesar and Pompey ever since he had secured the Asian tax rebate in 59, and his dislike and jealousy of Pompey were profound. Crassus had relished Pompey's discomfiture and had undoubtedly used Clodius to provoke it, although Clodius had often worked independently. He had also encouraged Cicero in his attempts to draw Pompey closer to the optimates to separate Pompey from Caesar. By 56 Pompey and Caesar were both in need of allies and it would appear that Crassus had a new reason to back them: 'to that ancient infirmity of Crassus, his avarice, there was now added a fresh and ardent passion, in view of the glorious exploits of Caesar, for trophies and triumphs' (Plutarch, *Crassus* 14).

Our knowledge of what occurred next is severely hampered by a paucity of sources, and historians both ancient and modern have interpreted the events very differently. Caesar was in Cisalpine Gaul and on 5 April Crassus travelled to Ravenna, where they must have discussed how to bring Pompey back into a revitalised *amicitia*. Pompey was shortly leaving for Sardinia and the two men journeyed to Luca to meet him for secret talks before he left. Cicero had visited Pompey just before the three men met but was given no hint of what was about to happen and, although 200 other senators are said to have visited Caesar at Luca, it was the secret conference between the three men which was of crucial importance. Pompey's popularity in Rome was fragile, which he found unsettling, but Caesar now needed Pompey more than Pompey needed Caesar. While Julia still lived the personal bond between the two men remained intact, but Dio (39.25) speculates that their agreement at Luca was not motivated by any residual affection or loyalty. He suggests that

Pompey had become jealous of Caesar's successes in Gaul and was hoping to gain control over him at Luca. This would seem unlikely and Leach (1978: 144) concludes, 'in 56 Pompey was much more concerned with building up his own power once more than with cutting a potential rival down to size'. Ward (1977) argues that Crassus and Caesar threatened Pompey with their opposition unless he renewed the Triumvirate, while Seagar speculates that Crassus might not have attended the meeting at all as there is no clear evidence that he did, and sees Pompey's position as weak and weakening. Cicero's alternative plan to draw Pompey away from Caesar towards the optimates was not working and, therefore, 'for both the present and the future his best policy lay in preserving his association with Caesar and Crassus' (Seagar 2002: 119). The rewards of collaboration were great for all three: renewed *imperium* for Caesar, the consulship of 55 for Crassus and Pompey, and five-year proconsular commands to follow. 'All three dynasts emerged from the meeting at Luca strengthened: Crassus gained most, but Pompeius was the strongest' (*ibid.*). Plutarch's interpretation of Pompey's involvement is simple: 'Pompey did all this from an unbounded love of power' (*Crassus* 14).

Whatever their individual motives, the three men were now working together again after Luca. Pompey carried on to Sardinia and informed Cicero that he must stop his attacks on Caesar, Crassus returned to Rome and informed Clodius that he must no longer attack Pompey, and Caesar returned to Gaul. The three men were back in business.

Note

1 Plutarch and Dio both say 500 miles. 400 is Cicero's own figure.

8

DISINTEGRATION, 55–52

The consulship of Pompey and Crassus, 55

While the Triumvirs were regrouping at Luca, in Rome Ahenobarbus was persisting both in his candidature and his determination to recall Caesar, planning to become commander in Gaul himself. Cato had returned from Cyprus and was encouraging his campaign, insisting the issue now ‘was not for office but for liberty’ (Plutarch, *Pompey* 52). Cicero abandoned his attacks on the *lex Campana* and appeared sidelined again, much to the delight of those senators who always enjoyed his discomfiture, and he did not attend the Senate during May. Cicero had become increasingly disillusioned with the ruling elite and now decided to throw in his lot with the Triumvirs. Pompey and Caesar had assisted his return from exile, which placed him under an obligation, and Cicero’s acceptance of Luca was his repayment. He wrote to Atticus (4.5) in April or May 56, ‘Since I am refused affection by the powerless, I shall do my best to win it from the powerful!’ Cicero wrote to Lentulus Spinther (*ad fam.* 1.9) that it was important to be flexible and seek *otium cum dignitate*, ‘the maintenance of peace with honour’.

Having made his decision, Cicero spoke eloquently on behalf of Caesar during the summer of 56. His speech, *On the Consular Provinces*, argued that Caesar was the best man for the job: ‘we should not recall a general who is set on serving the state well’ (34). Cicero was able to secure not only a vote of thanks to Caesar for his impressive work in Gaul but also additional funds and the provision of ten more legates for the campaign. During the summer he defended Balbus, Caesar’s close Spanish associate, who was accused of having acquired his citizenship illegally, and commented (61), ‘I thought it better to promote unity as the present situation demands, than to follow my earlier principles of antagonism’. Privately his letters suggest that his public face concealed anxiety, and he wrote to Atticus (4.5) in the autumn, ‘goodnight to principle, sincerity and honour ... hopes for a better future are impossible’. He hated the position he was now in and implied that he felt he had lost his freedom in politics.

The Triumvirs had agreed at Luca that Pompey and Crassus would become consuls in 55 but this proved to be easier said than done. The consul of 56, Marcellinus, clashed with Pompey and Crassus shortly after their return when news of the reinvigorated Triumvirate emerged. He demanded to know whether they would be standing as consuls. Pompey answered enigmatically ‘that perhaps he was, and perhaps he was not’. Pompey’s answer suggested ‘pride and arrogance’, and compared poorly with that of Crassus, who said he would stand ‘if it was for the interest of the city’ (Plutarch, *Crassus* 15). When Pompey and Crassus submitted their candidatures after the closing date Marcellinus refused to accept them, which raises the question why they had not done it in good time. It has been suggested that they were undecided or had already committed to other candidates, but it would seem much more

likely they had both appreciated that they would be unlikely to win with the hostile Marcellinus presiding and they must have hoped to prevent the elections taking place while he remained consul. Clodius orchestrated a campaign of violence in the city through the autumn and the elections were delayed until January 55. Dio writes (39.28) that the Senate reacted to the violence and intimidation by putting on mourning clothes, staying away from the Senate and failing to attend religious festivals and games; very little business was conducted during the final months of the year.

If no consuls took office at the beginning of the year, an *interrex* would be appointed for five days. He must be a patrician and it was his task to organise the elections as quickly as possible by nominating two candidates to the people. The elections which eventually took place were supervised by an *interrex* friendly to Pompey and Crassus, who were the nominated candidates, but were extremely violent. An armed gang was despatched to deal with hostile voters and to prevent Ahenobarbus, who still commanded considerable respect, going to the Forum. They killed his torch-bearer and Cato was wounded in the right arm fighting on Ahenobarbus' behalf. The elections for the other magistrates were considerably delayed while Crassus and Pompey attempted to pass various pieces of legislation pertaining to electoral behaviour which would have favoured their candidates. In an ironical, but no doubt satisfying, use of his power as an augur, Pompey announced that he had heard a clap of thunder and postponed the praetorian elections until, with the liberal use of violence and bribery, he was able to prevent the election of Cato and secure that of Vatinius instead. When the elections for the aedileship were held there was so much violence that Pompey returned home with blood on his toga, which caused his wife Julia to miscarry.

In April news arrived in Rome that Gabinius, close friend of Pompey and governor of Syria, had restored Ptolemy Auletes to the throne of Egypt. Dio (39.55) claims that this had been done on Pompey's orders, although a large bribe was also said to have changed hands. Gabinius had also continued Pompey's work of subduing Judaea. There had been a revolt led by Alexander, the son of Aristobulus, and, although his defeat had been costly, the area was now settled under Hyrcanus. Gabinius had probably also prepared to fight the Parthians, who had crossed the Euphrates and raided Roman and allied territory; Crassus later used this as his justification for his own campaign.

Two laws were passed by the tribune Gaius Trebonius regarding the future of the triumvirs themselves. The *lex Trebonia* gave Crassus the province of Syria, which he clearly expected to use as a launch-pad to attack Parthia, and he also gave Pompey the two Spanish provinces, not because Pompey desired any further military glory but possibly because of his existing links; strategically they also gave him control of the western Mediterranean. As there had been a recent revolt, Pompey was allocated four legions to meet any further danger. Both men were given power for five years and the right to

make war and peace independent of the Senate and people, thus ensuring freedom of action when slow lines of communication could delay crucial military decisions. Opposition was fierce. Cato filibustered and had to be imprisoned but was swiftly released when it was clear that public sympathy was behind him. Two tribunes, Ateius and Aquillius, had to be restrained by force when Ateius reported an opportune clap of thunder which necessitated the termination of proceedings. Crassus himself is said to have given one of the opposing senators a bloody nose and Dio (39.35) claims that four men died in the fighting. With the opposition cowed and the way cleared for the vote, the law was passed. Crassus and Pompey next proposed the *lex Pompeia Licinia*, which extended the command of Caesar in Gaul for another five years and secured that vital extension of *imperium* Caesar required to avoid prosecution.

On 12 August Pompey's new stone theatre on the Campus Martius was dedicated. It was an entertainment complex with a capacity of 10,000 and included a theatre, a temple to Venus and an enormous garden with covered colonnades running around its perimeter. The complex contained works of art from Pompey's collection, including fourteen statues, each of which represented one of the countries over which he had triumphed. The opening ceremonies lasted five days and included wild animal fights in which 500 lions perished. There was an elephant fight to amuse the crowd which Cicero found thoroughly distasteful. A project on this scale made a powerful impression on the city and paralleled the position of its patron within Roman politics, as was its intention.

Cicero spent much of his time now writing, informing Atticus (4.10), 'having lost my taste for anything else on account of our political situation, it is only literature which sustains and refreshes me now'. He had already composed 'On my Consulship' and now wrote a three-book account of his exile and return called 'On my Misfortune' which, fortunately, he decided not to publish. During 55 he wrote *De Oratore*, three books on rhetoric written as a dialogue, and in a letter to Quintus Cicero in 54 (5.1) refers to another work of which only fragments remain, *De Republica*, which was 'a discourse on the best possible condition of the state and on the best citizen'. His sequel, *De Legibus*, was probably written in 52 but, again, most is lost.

When the elections took place in November 55, Appius Claudius and Ahenobarbus were elected consuls for 54. Plutarch (Cato 44) was very critical of Cato, who was elected praetor, writing that, 'he rather diminished and disgraced it'; the main cause of his criticism was that Cato 'frequently appeared at the Rostra without sandals or toga', although Plutarch did refute the allegation that he was frequently drunk.

The road to Carrhae, 53

Crassus had been impatient to take up his new post and had left for Syria in the middle of November 55 before his consulship ended. The sources are inconsistent and contradictory about the nature of Crassus' commission. Plutarch (*Crassus* 16) writes that the *lex Trebonia* contained 'no mention of a Parthian war', but later says Crassus had been given full power to make war if he deemed it necessary; Dio (39.39, 40.12) similarly contradicts himself on the matter. Appian (2.18) says that there was an expectation Crassus would make war before he left, and the implication in all the sources is that his avarice had now been overtaken by his desire for military glory to rival the exploits of Caesar and Pompey. Ward (1977: 281) writes: 'The great military commands, first of Pompey and now of Caesar clearly demonstrated that if he was going to compete successfully for the status of the greatest man in Rome, he, too, would have to have one.' Crassus longed for military success because 'military laurels captured the public imagination and gave one great political influence with the populace, as both Pompey and Caesar had demonstrated' (*ibid.*). Appian (2.18) later wrote that Crassus chose to fight the Parthians because war against them would be 'glorious and profitable'. Financially Crassus was also now at a disadvantage and the stone theatre of Pompey had emphatically underlined his superior resources and largesse. The wealth of Parthia would enable Crassus to compete with Pompey and with Caesar, who now had the spoils of his Gallic campaigns.

In 57 the Parthian king, Phraates, was murdered by his two sons. The elder had taken over as King Orodes II, 'Hyrodes' in Plutarch, but had been overthrown soon after by his brother Mithridates. In a counter-*coup*, Orodes had retaken the throne and Mithridates had fled to Gabinius in Syria and appealed for Roman help. Gabinius had not responded and had focused his efforts on the restoration of Ptolemy Auletes, but continued instability in the area could be legitimately seen as a threat to Rome's interests, thus providing a justification for war. Caesar was keen to encourage his old patron. A powerful Crassus in the East diluted Pompey's stranglehold of the area and, if he failed, the area could provide a new command for Caesar once his work in Gaul was done. Pompey also was supportive. Crassus was over sixty years old and Pompey knew better than anyone the challenges he would face. The campaign would remove his old adversary from Rome and, if it did not kill him, Crassus would be dependent on the client kings who owed their status to Pompey, whose control would remain strong; Crassus could succeed only with his co-operation. Many optimates also lent their support, seeing any potential success on Crassus's part as a way to clip the wings of Pompey and Caesar, probably assuming that, if he did conquer Parthia, he could be used to counterbalance the other two. This was a strategy that had worked before, for example when they had used Sulla to check the power of Marius and Pompey

to check the power of Lepidus. Cato, unsurprisingly, was vocal in his opposition but, when Publius Crassus succeeded Lucullus as augur after his death and also married the daughter of Metellus Scipio, it was clear that other optimates either did not share Cato's hostility or were simply being more realistic about Crassus's power.

Crassus faced hostility as he attempted to raise troops and some of the tribunes tried to prevent the levies taking place. He was taking a large army, seven legions according to Plutarch, eleven in Florus, which was much bigger than the army normally allotted to a provincial governor. Although these numbers would suggest he was being equipped for a campaign on behalf of Rome and not one of his own making, this was not the general perception, and there was widespread suspicion of his motives. Cato's close friend, the tribune Ateius Capito, voiced the popular anger that 'anyone should go out to wage war on men who had done the state no wrong, but were in treaty relations with it' (Plutarch, *Crassus* 16). Ateius announced a stream of ominous portents which fuelled growing public criticism of Crassus, and he even attempted to place Crassus in custody, which the other tribunes intervened to prevent. As Crassus left the city, Ateius met him at the gates of Rome, where had placed a lighted brazier and 'cast incense and libations upon it, and invoked curses which were dreadful and terrifying in themselves, and were reinforced by sundry strange and dreadful gods whom he summoned and called by name' (*ibid.*). Ateius's extreme behaviour backfired and he was blamed for going too far with his 'myster-i-ous and ancient curses', and there was considerable sympathy for Crassus as he left the city.

Crassus sailed out of Brundisium into a rough and wintry sea and several ships were lost. He travelled via Galatia, where he met with King Deiotarus and reached Syria in the spring of 54. Crassus led his troops into Parthian lands immediately, where they took various cities with relative ease, then, leaving garrisons to hold them, he brought his army back to Syria for the winter, as was normal military procedure. Crassus has been criticised for losing the impetus of his campaign but he clearly felt it was important to train his troops before he pressed on further. Caesar's campaigns had already removed the best soldiers from Italy and any who remained would have been more likely to join Pompey's four Spanish legions than risk their lives with Crassus, who had little recent military experience. He had been pushed to raise enough troops, and among the captured at Carrhae were large numbers of Lucanians, Marsians and Apulians: not the choicest of recruits. Crassus needed to set up supply lines and plan for the next season's campaigning. Dio (40.15) wrote that the Parthians never fought during the winter months because of the climate: 'it was a season in which dampness in the air caused their bow-strings to slacken'. The Parthians did rely heavily upon their archers in battle, but their strings were made of sinew, which would not slacken as Dio described and it is more likely they desisted from fighting because frequent rain would turn the tracks to mud and make travelling virtually

impossible. Critical later historians such as Plutarch claimed that Crassus focused on selecting cities which would yield the best plunder rather than training his troops and planning properly, reinforcing his previous claim that avarice was Crassus' main imperative, but his strategy was possibly also due to the fact that his son Publius and his 1,000 Gallic cavalry were still needed in Gaul and did not arrive until the winter of 54–53.

During the spring of 53 Crassus received envoys from King Orodes, who enquired why he had been attacked for no reason. Crassus boasted he would tell him in person when he took Seleucia, and they returned to the king. A second group of envoys arrived from Artavasdes of Armenia, who offered his support if Crassus invaded Parthia via Armenia. This was a longer route but well protected with mountains and hills and they would be safer from cavalry attacks. News was starting to reach the camp about the Parthian army, which had an unsettling effect on the men. There were reports that they had weapons that could cut through anything and armour that could resist any blow, and 'their courage ebbed away' (Plutarch, *Crassus* 18). Despite the soldiers' fears 'of a struggle and a great peril', Crassus refused the Armenian king's offer but called upon him to lend his full support as a client king of Rome.

Unfortunately this arrangement gave Crassus no advantage because, when Orodes heard of it, he divided his forces and invaded Armenia, pinning down the armies of Artavasdes and holding the remainder in readiness for Crassus' expected attack.

Crassus's campaign, cursed at the gates of Rome, continued to be plagued by bad omens, assiduously reported by the sources. During the winter both Crassus and his son Publius had tripped on the steps of the Temple of Aphrodite and, as he led his forces across the Euphrates at Zeugma, 'many extraordinary peals of thunder crashed about them, and many flashes of lightning also darted in their faces, and a wind, half mist and half hurricane, fell upon their raft, breaking it up and shattering it in many places' (*Crassus* 19). Two thunderbolts allegedly fell on the camp, a horse drowned in the river, an eagle on a standard turned its head and the soldiers were given rations of lentils and salt, normally the offerings to the dead. It was reported that Crassus had dropped the entrails of a sacrificed animal on to the ground and that it had rained iron in Lucania, which the augurs interpreted as a sign that wounds would rain from the sky; Parthian arrows would later fulfil the prophecy.

The precise details of Crassus' campaign plans are unclear. At some point an Arab chieftain and client king Abgar, Ariamnes in Plutarch, came to his camp and then led the Roman army through an open desert. Abgar is portrayed in the sources as a wily traitor, 'a crafty and treacherous man' (*Crassus* 21) who owed his position to Pompey and was leading Crassus into a trap. The route he recommended was a trade road with oases running along it and leading to a river which would have supplied the Roman army with water from the recently melting snows. At some point Crassus would have

had to cross open ground and believed that doing it immediately put the Romans at an advantage; he also believed the Parthians were in retreat and was therefore pursuing them, hoping to catch up with their army. Marshall (1976: 157) convincingly argues that 'Crassus chose the route for military reasons and not because he was deceived into taking it. These stories appear then as the exaggerations of later Roman apologists to account for the disastrous failure of a Roman army'.

Plutarch (*Crassus* 22) describes the dispiriting march across the desert, which 'exhausted the men, but also ... filled them with an obstinate dejection'. The Parthian forces were close by under the command of Surena, 'in valour and ability ... the foremost Parthian of his time' (*Crassus* 21), but Crassus rejected advice to stay close to the mountains to prevent cavalry attacks. More evil portents had apparently been reported, and the sight of Crassus in a black cloak rather than the purple robe of a Roman general had caused great alarm; he had hurriedly disappeared into his tent to change. Then intelligence was received that 'their foes were coming up to fight with a large force and great confidence'. According to Plutarch Crassus was irresolute, at first deploying his troops in a long line with cavalry on the two wings, as advised by his legate Cassius, but then changing his mind and 'forming them into a hollow square of four fronts with twelve cohorts on each side'. Each cohort was assigned a squadron of cavalry so there would be 'equal protection everywhere'. Cassius and Publius Crassus commanded the wings and Crassus the centre. In this formation the Roman forces advanced and reached a stream, a welcome sight after their long march. Crassus was keen to press on, although all his officers except the impetuous Publius advised him to make camp, rest and carry out a reconnaissance but, after a short break which allowed the men 'to eat and drink as they stood in their ranks', Crassus led them 'at a quick and sustained pace until the enemy came into sight' (*Crassus* 23).

When the Romans first saw the Parthian army, it appeared 'neither numerous nor formidable'. Although Plutarch and Dio disagree about the events, they do agree about the deception Surena was perpetrating, and Plutarch describes how his troops had covered their armour with 'robes and skins' to conceal their strength from the Romans. As they approached, the Parthians beat on 'hollow drums of distended hide, covered with bronze bells', which produced a terrifying noise, 'a blend of wild beast's roar and harsh thunder peal' (*ibid.*). When they saw the fear on the faces of the Romans, the Parthians dropped their disguises and revealed themselves, 'blazing in helmets and breastplates' (*Crassus* 24). The Parthian archers began their attack and there was confusion in the Roman ranks. Crassus ordered his son Publius to lead a cavalry charge and drive the archers away from the Romans, which he did, apparently successfully, but then the Parthians turned and surrounded his men. Publius ordered his shield-bearer to kill him to avoid capture, but the Parthians cut off his head, impaled it on a

spike and paraded in front of the Roman army. Crassus urged his dispirited men to stand firm, which they managed until nightfall, when the Parthians pulled back and made a camp near by.

The Romans abandoned 4,000 wounded on the field and retreated to the nearby town of Carrhae. The next day the Parthians surrounded the town but Crassus was able to lead his men out in the darkness because, again, the Parthians had ceased their operations for the night. The Roman army was in disarray, fragmented and moving slowly. Five hundred cavalry led by Cassius deserted and succeeded in escaping to Syria, but it was all too easy for the swifter Parthians to catch up with Crassus. Plutarch (*Crassus* 30) and Dio (40.26–7), offer two different accounts of what followed. Plutarch writes that Surena rode personally to Crassus to offer him safe conduct, Dio that the invitation was sent. Dio writes that Crassus agreed to talk, hoping he could protect his men, Plutarch that he feared it was a trap. Crassus tried to persuade his men to keep moving but they refused and, walking forward to meet his fate, he told his officers to tell everyone that ‘Crassus perished because he was deceived by his enemies, and not because he was delivered up to them by his countrymen’. Plutarch describes how Surena offered Crassus a horse so they could ride to the Euphrates and sign a treaty on the border, but a scuffle broke out in which some of his officers and Crassus himself were killed. Dio writes that Surena sent Crassus a horse which he was forced to mount, resulting in a scuffle that led to his death. Surena was said to have held a mock Triumph in Seleucia, dressing a Roman captive resembling Crassus as a woman and parading him through the city escorted by lictors carrying *fascēs* weighed down with money bags. Dio also reported ‘a tradition which says that the Parthians in mockery poured molten gold into his mouth’, an insult to a man ‘obsessed with money’. Ovid’s pithy summary (*Fasti* 6) was that ‘Crassus on the Euphrates lost his eagles, his son, and his men, and finally his own life’. His head was displayed at the festivities to celebrate the marriage of the sister of Artavasdes of Armenia to the brother of Orodes. Rome had lost both a general and a client king in the dust of Carrhae.

Crassus had been a figure of great importance in Roman politics for nearly three decades. His ambition was to dominate the state, but it had been his misfortune to live at the same time as Pompey, who always seemed, in public at least, to have the upper hand. Cicero’s criticisms of Crassus and Plutarch’s insistence that he was motivated by avarice have distorted the facts. It is important to recognise the political skills of this consummate politician who was able to exert enormous influence from behind the scenes through his wealth, his connections and the political offices he held. Crassus was an equal partner with Pompey and Caesar in the Triumvirate and in its renewal at Luca, for which he must take some of the credit. He was never a popular politician and his senatorial colleagues had always resented his wealth and influence. No doubt many took pleasure in his end, which ‘illustrated the inevitable nemesis that follows hubris’ (Marshall 1976: 171).

To the Appian Way, 54–53

When Crassus left for Syria in November 55, Pompey was the only Triumvir in Rome. He had announced that he would rule Spain through legates as the Grain Commission required him to remain in the city which placed him at an advantage as he was on the spot and able to monitor the political situation. The two consuls of 54 were Appius Claudius, brother of Clodius, and Ahenobarbus, who had already sworn to work for the recall of Caesar. Cato, now praetor, remained resolutely negative towards the Triumvirs, but Caesar had recently distributed the fourth instalment of his *Commentaries* and his enemies failed to dent his reputation among the people, despite their frequent and public criticisms. He had defeated the Veneti and Aquitani tribes and had driven two Germanic tribes out of northern Gaul, bridging the Rhine, crossing the river, demonstrating Roman superior military strength, and then dismantling the bridge. Caesar had also crossed to Britain in 55 and 54, and his unfolding story of Rome's fearless victories and invasions largely kept popular sentiment on his side. During the winter 55–54 Pompey 'loaned' Caesar a legion he had been raising in Cisalpine Gaul to send to Spain. It was a sign of their closer relationship after Luca and Pompey claimed he had agreed because of his friendship with Caesar and to serve the best interests of the Republic.

Cicero took a back seat politically during this period but was often found in the courts acting in defence of friends of the Triumvirs; unable to attack the three men personally, their political enemies had to satisfy themselves with attacking their associates. Cicero did not relish these commissions and complained to a friend, Marcus Marius, that he was forced to defend men who did not deserve his skill (*ad fam.* 7.1). During the summer of 54, Caesar pressed Cicero to defend Vatinius, who was being prosecuted for *ambitus* in the praetorian elections of 55. Cicero won his case with an impressive eulogy of his former political enemy, much to the indignation of his friends, who shared the pain it had cost him to deliver it. Even more humiliating for Cicero was the defence of Gabinius, whose relationship with Cicero was severely strained, as Gabinius had made no attempt to prevent Cicero's exile when he was consul in 58. Gabinius had restored Ptolemy Auletes to the throne of Egypt, apparently with Pompey's support, while he was governor of Syria: 'Pompey's motives were charitable, but Gabinius's pecuniary' (Dio 39.55). He now faced a charge of treason, as he had abandoned Syria in order to restore Auletes, and the *publicani* claimed they had been attacked by pirates in his absence. Warnings had been found in the Sibylline Books that force must not be used to restore Auletes which Gabinius had ignored, and this had greatly alarmed the people.

Despite Pompey's urgings, Cicero even considered prosecuting Gabinius, but he contented himself with giving evidence against him at the trial, and,

according to Dio (39.62), 'Cicero's attack was particularly ruthless'. It was clear how unpopular Gabinius was with the people. Millar says they 'rushed together to the *quaestio* with the intention of tearing him to pieces' (1998: 178). To Cicero's dismay, Gabinius was acquitted, thirty-eight to thirty-two, largely thanks to a corrupt jury purchased by Pompey, but also because of a weak performance by the prosecution. Cicero told Quintus (3.4) there had been 'ominous rumours of dictatorship', which must have also played their part. The verdict was a travesty, and his enemies now tried another line of attack, challenging Gabinius' behaviour in Syria and his receipt of a hefty payment from Auletes. Three separate prosecutions were proposed, but the *repetundae*, extortion, charge was the most likely to succeed. This time Pompey gave Cicero no choice and he did defend Gabinius, but extremely reluctantly. Cicero felt the tangible contempt of his fellow senators. Pompey's insistence was insensitive and damaged their friendship. Cato was the unbending praetor in charge of the proceedings but the jury must also have been influenced by the outcry which followed the previous acquittal. Even though Pompey spoke on his behalf and Cicero defended him well, Gabinius was condemned and went into exile.

Caesar wrote to Cicero frequently during 54 and, rather flatteringly, dedicated a treatise to him, *De Analogia*, which he had written during a crossing of the Alps. He had also appointed Cicero's brother Quintus one of his legates in Gaul. The relationship between the two men was cordial and, as Caesar needed respectable friends in the city, Cicero's goodwill was valuable. Cicero had his own problems. Clodius continued to harass him, and both he and Quintus were in debt because of the disastrous financial consequences of his exile. It seems likely that Caesar lent Cicero money at this time, probably about half a million sesterces, which certainly eased his problems and drew them closer together. Cicero wrote to Quintus (2.11) in the summer: 'I have long been singing the praises of your Caesar. Believe me, he is my bosom friend, and I'm making no attempt to break the bond.' Cicero assisted in the groundwork for some public building projects planned and financed by Caesar, who was pouring wealth into the city, and wrote excitedly to Atticus in October of a marble voting enclosure, the *Saepta*, planned for the Tribal Assembly. In the autumn Cicero was delighted to become an augur, filling the vacancy left by the death of Publius Crassus. As this was largely due to the recommendation of Pompey, it must have gone some way to repair their friendship.

The relationship between Pompey and Caesar was severely tested in August when Julia died giving birth to a daughter who also died a few days later. Pompey was grief-stricken. It had been a successful marriage and he had been frequently criticised for his public devotion to his young wife. Pompey planned to have her buried in the grounds of his Alban estates but, after her public funeral in the city, Dio records (39.64), the crowd buried her in the Campus Martius, where a memorial was also erected. Caesar announced

gladiatorial games and a dinner in her memory, although these did not take place until his own return to Rome. Caesar's own feelings on his beloved daughter's death are not recorded but, as he had also lost his mother some months before, they can be imagined. Julia's death, however, had other consequences, and Plutarch (*Caesar* 23) concluded that 'the relationship which alone kept the distempered state in harmony and concord was now dissolved'.

The political system was seriously challenged in 54 as the consular elections plumbed new depths of corruption. There were four candidates. Aemilius Scaurus had served with Pompey in the East and had married Mucia after her divorce from Pompey. He had remained on good terms with his old commander but was awaiting prosecution for irregularities when governor of Sardinia. Memmius had opposed the Triumvirs in 58 when he was praetor, but now had the support of Caesar. The other two candidates were Messalla and Calvinus, both of whom openly opposed the Triumvirate. Memmius must have believed that his election was not certain and, therefore, made arrangement with Calvinus and the two consuls of 54. In return for the consuls' support, Memmius and Calvinus were to ensure that Ahenobarbus and Appius Claudius, the outgoing consuls, got the provinces they wanted by rigging the assignments. So much money was being spent on bribes by all the candidates that interest rates doubled from 4 per cent to 8 per cent in mid-July. When this scandalous arrangement became an open secret there were several days of heated debate in the Senate and the elections were postponed until September.

In early September Cicero successfully defended Scaurus against the charges of extortion, without Pompey's help. He was assisted by Clodius, who had set his sights on the praetorship and was now very active in the courts. Much to Cicero's disgust, Clodius was 'forging *amicitiae* with former foes and posing as a sound and reliable figure: just the sort to make an excellent praetor' (Tatum 1999: 231). Pompey was infuriated by the arrangement made by the consular candidates and probably persuaded Memmius to reveal full details to the Senate at the end of September. After debating the issues, the Senate proposed to hold a *tacitum iudicium*, an inquiry into the behaviour of the candidates where the witnesses had to swear oaths and which was conducted with a jury but without a prosecutor. This proposal, however, was vetoed and, after the use of *obnuntiatio*, all the candidates were indicted for *ambitus* instead, and the elections were delayed again. When it was clear there were going to be no consuls for 53, the situation in Rome became extremely unsettled. There had been a marked increase in street violence during 54 and the quaestor Faustus Sulla, who had been attacked in September, now moved around the city with a bodyguard of 300 men. In October the Tiber had burst its banks and flooded some of the grain storage buildings, and food shortages added to the unease caused by political uncertainty. There were rumours that Pompey had intervened in the elections and had induced Memmius to make

his confession because he hoped for a dictatorship, and these rumours acquired a ring of truth in December when the tribune Hirrus, in the face of Cato's fierce opposition, proposed that Pompey should take over as dictator. Plutarch (*Pompey* 54) reports the matter was dropped because 'many of Pompey's friends came forward in defence of him, declaring that he neither asked nor desired that office'. Maybe he had been testing the water.

Unfortunately Cicero's letters to Quintus break off at the end of 54 and there is also a gap of over two years in his correspondence with Atticus. Although some letters to Gaius Scribonius Curio, quaestor in Asia, remain, detailed knowledge of 53 and 52 is hampered by the lack of Ciceronian correspondence. The first part of the year was unsettled and unsettling. For the first time the news from Gaul was not good. Caesar had lost a legion and five cohorts in an attack on one of his camps by the Eburones and had been unable to winter in Cisalpine Gaul. There were no consuls for the first months of 53, although it is unclear why successive *interreges* had been unable to hold the consular elections. Dio (41.45) suggests the tribunes were taking a lead and offering 'a number of obstructive suggestions', presumably enjoying the opportunities this unusual situation offered, for example organising the Ludi Apollinares, normally the task of the urban praetor. Appian (2.19) was very critical of Pompey's behaviour during the first months of 53: 'the disorder was such that at one time the Republic was without consuls for eight months, Pompey conniving at the state of affairs in order that there might be need of a dictator'. Pompey had been absent from the city, possibly dealing with the grain supply, but on his return was again offered the dictatorship; he again refused, which would suggest that Appian was mistaken. Pompey actively assisted in the elections which were eventually held in the summer of 53 and Messalla and Calvinus finally became consuls.

News of the devastating defeat at Carrhae and the death of Crassus reached Rome in the autumn. The Triumvirate had lost a member; 'fortune had removed from the ring the third competitor' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 53). The death of Julia had opened up an opportunity for Pompey to shift the balance of power, and Caesar was well aware of the added implications of the loss of Crassus. He now proposed another marriage alliance, offering his great-niece Octavia to Pompey and himself to Pompey's daughter Pompeia. This would have required three divorces, as only the widower Pompey was free to marry again, but he refused and appeared unwilling to consider remarriage so soon after his wife's death. Caesar and Pompey remained united in their grief but it was a fragile bond which must have been apparent to friends and enemies alike. When Pompey did choose to marry again, probably at the end of 53 or the beginning of 52, it was to Cornelia, the widow of Publius Crassus and the daughter of Metellus Scipio, the noblest of all Romans. Pompey was now fifty-four, but he was as attentive to his charming and intelligent young wife as he had been to Julia and, according to Plutarch (*Pompey* 55), was criticised because he appeared 'neglectful of the unhappy condition of the city'. Further

links with the optimates were established when Pompey's eldest son Gnaeus married the daughter of Appius Claudius, whose older daughter was married to Cato's nephew, Brutus. These marriages appear to indicate a shift in Pompey's allegiance, away from Caesar and towards the optimates, but Caesar had married into the family of Calpurnius Piso in 59 and Pompey may well have felt that this was a similar strategic arrangement. Of greater significance was the willingness of the optimates to accept such dynastic links. Pompey appears to have positioned himself between Caesar and the optimates and there is no clear indication or evidence that he was moving closer to one or the other at this time.

All attention now turned to the elections for 52. Three men were competing for the consulship, Milo, Plautius and Metellus Scipio. Milo was a strong candidate, popular with Cato and many optimates and also with the people because of the lavish games he had staged earlier in the year. Although Milo had given Pompey strong support in 57 against Clodius and his thugs, Pompey had decided to back Plautius, an old military friend, and Scipio, who was his new father-in-law, in the election. Cicero was committed to the election of Milo, whom he felt to be an admirable candidate, assuring Curio (*ad fam.* 2.6) that he would use 'my own electoral influence, which may not be as powerful, but is at least well tried, honest, and under obligation to him': honourable tools but ill-suited to the bear pit of electioneering in the autumn of 53. Clodius was standing as praetor with a *popularis* programme he planned to implement when elected. Cicero later wrote: 'Clodius saw that Milo was going to be elected consul with the full consent of the Roman people and was worried that, if he were, his own praetorship would be hamstrung' (*Pro Milone* 25). Clodius consequently joined forces with Plautius and Scipio. Their campaign was characterised by bribery and clashes co-ordinated by Clodius. Cicero described his 'choice collection of ruffians' and 'a slave gang of loutish labourers' brought from the Apennines to terrorise Milo's supporters. The situation quickly degenerated into gang warfare on the streets and Cicero later claimed that Clodius had threatened, 'if Milo's consulship could not be taken from him, his life would. Both in the Senate and in public meetings he repeated the same suggestion' (*ibid.*). It was impossible to hold elections and, yet again a new year began without magistrates.

The sole consulship, 52

At the beginning of 52 Caesar was in his winter camp in Ravenna, recruiting in Cisalpine Gaul. He had been away from Rome for six years. Discontent among the Gallic tribes had increased, but his campaign in 53 been successful and he was now ready to organise Gaul as a province and return to the city in triumph. His public works within the city were proceeding well, the plundered wealth of the Gallic tribes was being poured into new buildings, and an extension planned to the Forum was intended to eclipse the building projects of Pompey.

Unfortunately no letters remain from Cicero from 52 and again we are denied his distinctive voice, but we know the year started very badly. Not only had no magistrates been elected, a plethora of portents were reported. Wolves were apparently seen in the city, dogs howled at night, a statue of Mars was seen to sweat for three days, earth, stones, even blood were observed flying through the sky and there were flashes and thunderbolts. And Clodius was murdered. There were several versions of what had occurred. He left Rome on 17 January and travelled on horseback down the Appian Way towards Aricia with two friends. Although he did not have his normal entourage of companions, he was accompanied by a bodyguard of thirty armed slaves, not an excessive number for a man of his importance. On his return the next day Clodius called in at his villa near Bovillae and also at Pompey's villa at Alsium. Milo had left Rome on the 18th on his way to his home town of Lanuvium accompanied by his wife Fausta, Sulla's daughter, some friends and a group of armed slaves, including some ex-gladiators, two of whom, Eudamas and Birria, were well known from the arena.

Unfortunately the two groups of travellers encountered each other on the road, coincidentally very close to a statue of Bona Dea. While the slaves brawled, words were exchanged and Clodius was wounded by a spear. He was carried to a nearby inn and at some point Milo decided to kill him. His body was left on the road which, ironically, had been built by his famous ancestors.

A passing senator brought Clodius's body to the city. Crowds gathered and, according to Appian, 'the people were thunderstruck, and they passed the night in the Forum' (2.21). They were further inflamed by the grief of his wife Fulvia, who displayed the body, naked and bloody, on the Rostra, and by two of the tribunes, Plancus and Rufus, who addressed the crowd. The body was taken for cremation on a makeshift pyre of benches and platforms into the Senate House, which burned down in the subsequent blaze, as did the adjoining Basilica Porcia. The angry mob then attacked the house of Milo, whom they blamed for the death, and that of the *interrex* Aemilius Lepidus, to pressure him into holding elections quickly. The Senate recognised these were, indeed, desperate times and passed the SCU, urging the *interrex*, Pompey and the tribunes to take whatever measures they deemed necessary to

safeguard the Republic, even authorising Pompey to raise troops in Italy, which he began to do. Milo returned to the city for the elections and a *contio* was held where Cicero, supported by the tribune Caelius, gave Milo his support, insisting Clodius had sought Milo out and not the other way round. Three other tribunes, one of whom was the historian Sallust, held *contiones* of their own expressing very different views and told the crowd that Milo now planned to kill Pompey.

A proposal was put forward that Pompey should be dictator and another that he should be consul, with Caesar as his colleague. The timing was not good for Caesar. It had become clear that the Romans intended to annex Gaul permanently and, encouraged by news of Rome's domestic crisis, a young noble from the Arveni, tribe, Vercingetorix, had succeeded in uniting the tribes for the first time. The Gauls had reached the conclusion that Caesar would be summoned to Rome and they had seized the moment. But Caesar was not summoned; instead he returned to face his greatest challenge in the war, which left a clear field for Pompey.

The relationship between Pompey and Milo broke down completely. Pompey even refused to appear in the Senate, now convened in the *porticus* of his own theatre, unless Milo was excluded from proceedings, and he surrounded himself with a growing number of bodyguards. *Interrex* succeeded *interrex* but still no elections were held and, as pressure mounted for a dictator to be appointed, Cato and Bibulus came up with a compromise. They had finally accepted that the only man with the *auctoritas* to restore order was Pompey but balked at the idea of a dictatorship. They proposed that Pompey become sole consul. To become consul again broke the rules of the *lex Villia Annalis*, as Pompey had held the office in 55, and a consul without a colleague was fundamentally un-Republican, a contradiction in terms, but it was an ingenious solution which appealed to Pompey's vanity and avoided the hated office of dictator, last held by Sulla. It is possible that the *interrex* Sulpicius appointed Pompey sole consul; he may have been elected. While the irony of the most diehard optimates conferring upon Pompey something akin to another extraordinary command should not be lost, their political astuteness must also be recognised. A sole consul did not have the autonomy of a dictator, as he could still be checked by tribunician veto. The appointment also offered the luxury of time and some semblance of normality. A dictator would have had only six months in which to work, whereas a consulship was for a year, by which time, hopefully, some restoration of the system could have been achieved.

Pompey acted swiftly once he had taken up the sole consulship, which would suggest some level of advance planning. There were two clear priorities in the city: the restoration of law and order and prosecution of those responsible for its collapse, and the introduction of policies to prevent any recurrence of violence. Only three days after taking office Pompey introduced two laws. The *lex de vi* set up an immediate inquiry into the death of Clodius

and the crisis which had preceded it, the *lex de ambitu* proposed to prosecute any magistrates who had held office since 70 and had been involved in electoral corruption. The penalties were to be harsher and the procedures quicker than any previous proposals. Very strict regulations were imposed for the composition of courts and juries, combined with time-limited speeches and witness hearings and the abolition of character testimonials during trials. There was a spirited outcry. Hortensius took the view that the existing laws were sufficient, while Cato took great exception to their retrospective nature. Interestingly he was backed by some of Caesar's supporters, who feared he would be adversely affected, and by supporters of Milo, headed by Caelius, who felt he was being unfairly targeted. All this opposition exasperated Pompey, who, rather ironically, threatened to use force to get the measures through, although that proved unnecessary.

On 4 April Milo was the first to be tried under the new law. The president of the court was Ahenobarbus, elected by the people from the consulars according to the new procedures. The jury were handpicked by Pompey himself and all were said to be chosen for their 'distinction and integrity' according to Asconius (*Commentary on the Pro Milone* 38). There were three charges brought against Milo: *de vi*, *de ambitu* and *de sodaliciis*, illegal association, and Cicero was the defending lawyer, a commission he took against the wishes of Pompey and Caesar but out of loyalty to Milo, who had stood up to Clodius and supported his return from exile. On the first day the supporters of Clodius created such a disturbance that Pompey promised to appear in person with a detachment of troops to keep the peace. The crowd were clearly moved by the evidence of Clodius's widow Fulvia on the third day and Pompey took careful measures to ensure that the fourth and final day would pass without incident. All the taverns were closed and guards were placed around the Forum and at all the entrances. Pompey himself, surrounded by his guards, took up a prominent position, but even this show of force could not subdue Clodius' supporters, and the situation wholly unnerved Cicero as he rose to speak in Milo's defence. Dio (54.2) claimed that 'the orator lost his nerve and panicked when he saw Pompey and an unusual array of soldiers in court', but Asconius (*Commentary* 41) was more measured, merely observing that Cicero spoke 'without the firmness that was his habit'. The *Pro Milone* which Cicero later published is the speech he had hoped to give. Dio (40.54) was ungenerous when he wrote, 'it was composed at leisure some time later, when he had recovered his confidence'. Milo was convicted by thirty-eight votes to thirteen. The jury was convinced that, even if Milo was not responsible for the initial wound, he had certainly given the order to put Clodius to death. He left for Marseilles (Massilia) and exile. It was a humiliating moment for Cicero, and he later sent a copy of the *Pro Milone* to Milo, who is said to have responded that it was lucky the speech had not been delivered. If it had he would not be in Marseilles and enjoying such wonderful Massilian mullets!

A further round of prosecutions followed Milo's trial and Pompey found some of his own supporters brought before the courts. His new father-in-law Metellus Scipio was facing a prosecution for *ambitus* which was conveniently dropped and he became joint consul with Pompey in August 52. Pompey is said to have put in a successful personal appeal to save Plancus, despite the prohibition of such speeches in his law. Cato was in the jury and is said to have covered his ears, saying he would not listen to Pompey's illegal speeches. Although he was removed, Plancus was still condemned, which reflected badly on Pompey. Other supporters such as Plautius, also indicted for *ambitus*, were not favoured with his intervention and the law was allowed to take its course, as it also did with Plautius and Aemilius Scaurus. The restoration of law and order was favourably received, but Pompey's intervention in some trials was not popular, and 'once again Pompey was in ill-repute' (Plutarch, *Pompey*, 55).

Caesar was tied down in Gaul by the revolt of Vercingetorix for most of 52 but both he and his supporters must have been looking ahead to his imminent return to Rome; his enemies likewise. Because of the threat of prosecution that had hung over his head since 59, Caesar appreciated he could not return to the city as a private citizen. The return of Gabinius had resulted in trials, conviction and exile, and had underlined that Caesar must keep *imperium* to avoid the same fate. The earliest he could become consul was 48, so Caesar needed to retain his command in Gaul until the summer of 49. The law passed in 55 by Crassus and Pompey granting him a further five years' *imperium* in Gaul had implied that the earliest a replacement could be considered was March 50, although it could be argued that the provisions of this law did not take effect until the five years' *imperium* granted by the *lex Vatinia* of 59 had run their course, which would have extended Caesar's power into 49 (see pp. 171–2). If his replacement arrived in 49, and if he was given permission to stand as consul *in absentia*, Caesar could return to Rome with *imperium* in 48 and avoid prosecution. During 52 all ten tribunes proposed that Caesar should be recalled to serve as Pompey's colleague, but, as the situation in Gaul precluded it, Caesar persuaded them to pass instead the Law of the Ten Tribunes to allow him to stand for the consulship *in absentia* when his command was coming to an end. Cato, unsurprisingly, stridently opposed the measure, but it was passed with the support of Pompey, whose advance agreement had been secured by Caesar. Pompey also had his own command in Spain renewed for five more years.

Other measures by Pompey, however, were causing Caesar great concern. A senatorial decree had been passed in 53 which Pompey now enacted into law. It stipulated that there must be a five-year gap between holding an urban magistracy and taking up a provincial governorship. It had been normal to proceed at the end of a consul or praetor's year of office to a province where the money he had spent to achieve the high office he recently held could be recouped. The intention of Pompey's law was good. Politicians borrowed

heavily to dispense the bribery now common in elections; few creditors would be happy to wait for five years and the exploitation of a province to fund their repayments. The measure was designed to make electoral bribery more difficult and 'urban office less tempting as a passport to extortion abroad' (Seager 2002: 138). This law adversely affected Caesar's future prospects because, under the former system it was most likely that he would have been replaced by one of the consuls of 49 and there would have been a period of winding down during which Caesar would have retained *imperium*. Now a replacement could be sent to Gaul as soon as the matter came up for consideration on 1 March 50. The law also stipulated that a candidate must appear in person and submit his own nomination for office, thus directly undermining the recent Law of Ten Tribunes. If Caesar did this, he would enter the city without *imperium* and would have to face the consequences. When Caesar's supporters pointed this problem out to Pompey, he professed innocence and insisted that he had not meant to undermine Caesar's position. He added a codicil to the law that Caesar should be exempt from its provisions but, as this was a personal intervention, it did not have the backing of either the Senate or the people and, therefore, had no legal substance.

Suetonius (28) claims that the inclusion of Caesar in the new law had been an 'oversight' on Pompey's part, but Pompey was sending mixed messages. He had supported the Law of the Ten Tribunes, but the law concerning the tenure of provincial governorships had underlined Caesar's vulnerability and his need for Pompey's continued backing to survive politically. It is important to remember the law was a confirmation of a senatorial decree passed the year before and not a law of Pompey's creation, but he used it to make a clear statement. Pompey was flexing his muscles, not only to Caesar but also to the optimates, who were reminded of the surviving link between the two men and its possible implications. They also witnessed the power of the man they had appointed sole consul, having grudgingly recognised that only he had the *auctoritas* to restore order in the city. Seager (2002: 139) writes, 'thus Pompeius reckoned to assert his dominance over both parties'. Leach (1978: 160) concludes that Caesar and Pompey were inevitably moving apart, as Pompey had now achieved 'a position of almost total dominance in Rome by the end of 52'. He was not a man who liked rivals: Clodius was gone, as was Milo, Crassus no longer balanced the three, and the enemies of Caesar were more vociferous than ever. To eliminate the threat of his only potential rival, all Pompey had to do was nothing. Cato and the optimates were determined to bring Caesar down and, in return for assistance, Pompey could ensure that Caesar's place was always below his; unfortunately 'he had not yet learnt that this was the one price Caesar would not pay' (*ibid.*).

9

THE DIE IS CAST, 51–48

No surrender, 51–50

Cicero's voice and keen observation of events in Rome was largely quietened for most of 51 and 50. Pompey's law of 52 which had imposed a five-year gap between holding an urban magistracy and a provincial command had created a temporary vacuum. Those consulars who had not taken a province after their year of office were now called upon to fill these posts until the system was fully operational five years down the line. Cicero was appointed governor in Cilicia to replace Appius Claudius and reluctantly accepted, insisting his time there must be limited. He pined for 'the world, the Forum, Rome, my house, my friends', but told Atticus (5.2), 'my one consolation for this colossal bore is that I expect it will only last a year'. Cicero asked Marcus Caelius Rufus to send him full and detailed accounts of events and his twelve surviving letters are an invaluable source, as Caelius was a shrewd and able correspondent. He had been a close associate of Clodius but Cicero had always liked him and in 56 successfully defended him on a murder charge.

Cicero visited Pompey in Tarentum to seek his advice about the possibility of a Parthian attack and reached Cilicia in May to find 'a forlorn and, without exaggeration, permanently ruined province' (*ad Att.* 5.16). There were two depleted legions but no tradition of local recruitment and Cicero had to ask the friendly client king Deiotarus of Galatia to loan him another legion. When the Parthians crossed the Euphrates Cicero advanced towards the Syrian frontier, where his cavalry performed well and, aided by simultaneous actions in Syria, the threat was blunted. He was hailed *imperator* by his troops and was quick to dream of the possibility of a Triumph on his return to Rome. The news that Bibulus, recently arrived as governor of Syria, had been less successful in his military efforts, losing an entire cohort, added to his pleasure. Cicero now concentrated on governing Cilicia fairly and effectively. He investigated complaints about unfair taxation, fixed the interest rate at 1 per cent, and was generous with his hospitality. The letters from Cilicia provide a fascinating insight into the demands placed upon a provincial governor at this time, a role Cicero accomplished with probity and honour rather than the customary self-interest. His thoughts, however, were never far from home, and he returned to Italy in the summer of 50, by which time the political situation in Rome had become perilous and war seemed close. Cicero's voice of moderation and conciliation was sadly lacking during this period of heightened tensions and firmly entrenched positions, but whether he could have made any difference is debatable.

Cato had stood as consul for 51 to mastermind the campaign to recall Caesar. As he had refused to employ any of 'the usual methods by which the people are won over and flattered' (Plutarch, *Cato* 49), he was not elected, and the new consuls were Marcus Marcellus and the jurist, Sulpicius Rufus. M. Marcellus loathed Caesar, as did most optimates. They hated his *popularis*

politics, his popularity with the people, but particularly the longevity of his Gallic command, which had deprived many of them of the chance of military glory. These were men of *dignitas* who believed they should be pre-eminent in the Republic and now feared that Caesar's achievements placed him, like Pompey, ahead of, and probably above, them all. Caesar had spent the winter 52–1 in Cisalpine Gaul, where, according to his own account, he had been received with 'a remarkable demonstration of esteem and affection' (Caesar, *Gallic War* 8.50), and he used the wealth from his conquests on a lavish spending spree on his army and within Italy and the provinces to build up personal support. He was arrogant, extravagant and immoral, and many had personal grievances against him, such as Cato, who had watched his son-in-law Bibulus sidelined and humiliated in 59 and had been forced to tolerate the long affair between Caesar and his half-sister Servilia.

M. Marcellus immediately proposed that Domitius Ahenobarbus, Cato's brother-in-law, should replace Caesar, who had defeated Vercingetorix at Alesia in September 52. He argued that this had effectively ended Gallic resistance and suggested that Caesar could come back to Rome and stand for the consulship of 50. This was completely unacceptable to Caesar, who would be forced to return without *imperium* and, therefore, could be prosecuted for the alleged irregularities of his consulship. The *lex Licinia Pompeia* of 55 which gave Caesar an additional five years' *imperium* in Gaul had been imprecise in its wording, a frequent problem with laws at the time. If the five years began when the law was passed in February or March of 55, it could be argued that Caesar's *imperium* expired in February or March of 50, and subsequent events suggest this was Pompey's interpretation. It could be argued however, that the additional five years began when the *imperium* granted by the *lex Vatinia* of 59 expired, which would extend Caesar's *imperium* into 49. The Law of Ten Tribunes had granted him the right to seek election in his absence, but again had not specified for which election, either 50 or 49; Caesar chose to assume the latter. There were no legal grounds upon which Caesar could be recalled in 51 and the earliest legal date for this, however the situation was interpreted, was March 50.

M. Marcellus was on extremely shaky ground, but was also flying in the face of reality. The war in Gaul was far from over after Alesia. Many tribes were restless, and even Caesar's enemies in the Senate could see it was a safer option to retain a general who understood the situation thoroughly. Caesar had not yet organised Gaul as a province and, if he were replaced, the glory for this and for further victories would go to another. Caesar was not prepared to jeopardise his own prestige. Appian (2.25) wrote that M. Marcellus's proposal infuriated Caesar and he 'clapped his hand on his sword-hilt and exclaimed, "This shall give it to me"'. If M. Marcellus had hoped for Pompey's support he was disappointed. Pompey could hardly be expected to back an obvious breach of a law he had himself passed in 55, nor was he likely to agree to circumvent the Law of the Ten Tribunes, which he had personally guaranteed.

Pompey made it clear to M. Marcellus in March that he would not support his attempts to recall Caesar early and was supported by the other consul, Sulpicius, and several of the tribunes. The matter did not resurface until September.

As he was unable to recall Caesar, M. Marcellus chose to insult him instead. Caesar had created a new colony at Novum Comum in Cisalpine Gaul and there were rumours he intended to grant full citizenship to Transpadane Gaul, which would have greatly increased the number of his clients and further enhanced his power. M. Marcellus ordered the flogging of one of the city magistrates and sent him to Caesar to show his wounds. No sources remain detailing Caesar's reaction to this affront, but it greatly irritated Pompey, and when the Senate suggested in July that Pompey should retrieve a legion he had lent Caesar, he refused to do so immediately. When Caesar's recall was discussed again on 29 September, it was decided that the earliest date it could be considered was March 50. Caelius reported to Cicero that, when it was put to Pompey that Caesar might want to be a consul and retain his army, Pompey enigmatically replied, 'What if my son wanted to lay into me with a stick?' (8.8). His remark is open to many interpretations and can be seen either as a veiled threat or as something more benign. Although the optimates could be certain Pompey would not allow Caesar to assume too much power, he was clearly not prepared to abandon him. Seagar (2002: 139) argues that Pompey's policy at this stage was to ensure that, when Caesar did return, he would have to depend upon Pompey's co-operation and goodwill to ensure his political survival. If Caesar was replaced in March 50, which Pompey seemed to favour, he would be forced to return during 50 to stand in the elections in person, which would make him vulnerable and in need of Pompey's help. Pompey wanted Caesar to understand that he was in a subordinate relationship. As long as Caesar still needed his help, he could not aspire to be Pompey's equal. The optimates failed in their attempts in 51 to recall Caesar because they needed Pompey's support, which they clearly did not have. He was in an influential and pivotal position, a place he always relished.

The new consuls for 50 were Gaius Marcellus, cousin of Marcus, and Aemilius Lepidus Paullus who, according to Appian and Plutarch, had been bribed by Caesar with the large sum of 1,500 talents. Cicero was alarmed to hear that one of the new tribunes was C. Scribonius Curio, the ex-crony of Clodius, who had been implicated in the Vettius affair in 59. He had been openly critical of the Triumvirate in 59 and it was expected that he would back Caesar's optimate critics, but Cicero was amazed to receive news from Caelius in February that Curio was openly supporting Caesar. Curio had recently spent a great deal of money on lavish funeral games for his father and, although there is no contemporary evidence, it was widely believed that, in return for his services, Caesar had 'freed Curio the tribune from many debts' (Plutarch, *Caesar* 29). Velleius (2.48) considered Curio to be extremely

dangerous, 'a man of noble birth, eloquent and outspoken, who regarded everyone's money and morals as equally expendable, a plausible rogue with a remarkable genius for doing harm'. Gruen argues that Curio was 'playing his own game and building up his own political base' (1997: 477). He sees him as a tribune in the mould of Clodius, he was married to his widow, Fulvia, and suggests that he turned to Caesar only when his own *popularis* measures, such as a distribution of land to the poor, were rejected by the Senate.

When Caesar's command came up for debate on 1 March 50, Curio made a counter-proposal from Caesar, who requested that 'If he himself laid down his arms, Pompey should do the same ... arguing that if they took away his forces from him but confirmed Pompey in the possession of his, they would be accusing one of seeking a tyranny and making the other a tyrant' (Plutarch, *Caesar* 30). This would have placed Caesar and Pompey on the same level, thus removing Pompey from that position of superiority he so relished. It was a clever tactic which implied that Pompey wanted to cling on to power while Caesar was prepared to compromise. Appian (2.27) wrote that Curio 'was applauded by the people because his proposition looked very reasonable and because they thought that he alone had been prepared to incur the enmity of both men, in duty to the state'. Dio (40.62) was far more cynical; 'he knew perfectly well that Pompey would reject it and this gave Caesar a plausible excuse for not dismissing his soldiers either'. Pompey was shaken by Curio's proposal and now suggested that Caesar should leave Gaul on 13 November 50. Caelius suggested to Cicero that Pompey was afraid that Caesar would be elected consul while still in possession of his army and province, and was attempting to prevent this. This cannot be true, as Caesar could have stood *in absentia* in the election of 50 and, if he returned in November, could have waited outside the city with his troops and then entered as consul with *imperium* at the beginning of 49. Pompey had been indicating again that Caesar needed his co-operation to return unopposed; he was continuing to assert his superior position.

Curio continued in his dogged opposition to any demands to recall Caesar throughout the early summer, repeatedly suggesting that Pompey should also lay down his command and his seven legions in Spain. Events in the East temporarily took centre stage when fears of a Parthian invasion resurfaced and the Senate ordered Pompey and Caesar to surrender a legion each in preparation. While Cicero and Caelius speculated that it might save Rome if one of the great men went to Parthia to lead a campaign, Pompey took this opportunity 'artfully' (Appian 2.29), to demand the return of the legion he had loaned Caesar in 54, and Caesar had to surrender two legions. He did this, apparently uncomplainingly, but only after first handing each soldier a sum equivalent to a year's wages. Ironically the legions were never sent, the threat receded, and they were stationed in southern Italy awaiting developments.

A change in Pompey's attitude to the situation can be detected during the summer when he fell gravely ill, possibly with a recurrence of malaria. He

made a good recovery but, as he travelled back to Rome from his home in Naples, he was overwhelmed by crowds rejoicing in his restored health. Plutarch (*Pompey* 57) believes Pompey mistook enthusiasm for political support, and that he 'indulged himself in unlimited confidence and contempt for Caesar's power'. Caesar's two legions had recently arrived from Gaul, and Pompey was heartened to hear stories of potential mutiny and disaffection in the ranks which, no doubt, Caesar had paid his soldiers to recount. This was the moment when Pompey made his frequently quoted remark, 'in whatever part of Italy I stamp upon the ground, there will spring up armies of foot and horse' (*ibid.*). During his illness Pompey had informed the Senate that he was prepared to lay down his command and repeated the offer on his return, but Curio riposted that only when Pompey made the first move would Caesar follow, as 'it would not be advisable either for Caesar or for the Romans that such great authority should be held by one man' (Appian 2.28). They had reached an impasse.

By October, Cicero could see no way of avoiding war and started to consider his own options. Caelius could bring him little comfort. In August 50 (8.14) he wrote: 'Pompey is determined not to allow Caesar to become consul without first giving up his army and provinces, but Caesar is convinced that his position will be jeopardised if he leaves his army.' Cicero had an extremely difficult choice to make. He had always admired Pompey but Pompey had not always been a loyal and supportive friend, as Cicero's exile clearly attested. Since his return in 57 Cicero's relationship with Caesar had blossomed and they had become regular correspondents. Cicero worked hard on Caesar's behalf to facilitate some of his building projects in Rome and there was also the thorny issue of a rather large loan from Caesar which Cicero had still not repaid. When Cato opposed a vote to award Cicero a public thanksgiving for his successful campaign in Cilicia, the normal prelude to the Triumph he so longed for, Caesar urged Curio to support the motion strongly and had later written to congratulate him. Caesar's support certainly helped Cicero endure the twenty days of celebration awarded to Bibulus, on Cato's recommendation, for his less successful activities in Syria!

Cicero was becoming increasingly frustrated by the obdurate attitude of the leading optimates, and matters came to a head on 1 December. Curio again demanded that both Caesar and Pompey lay down their command, but when C. Marcellus put this to the vote he divided the proposals, and, although the motion that Caesar should resign was passed, the motion that Pompey should lose his command was not. When Curio reintroduced his own motion, however, it was passed by 370 votes to 22, a huge majority for peace which clearly demonstrated that the majority of senators did not want war. Unfortunately the influence of the twenty-two hard-liners was overwhelming, and C. Marcellus scathingly dismissed the Senate and ignored the vote. He became infuriated by the rejoicings of the crowd outside, who mistakenly believed war had been averted, and announced that Caesar's army had crossed

the Alps and was approaching Rome. C. Marcellus marched through the Forum with his entourage and thrust a sword into Pompey's hand, urging him to lead them against Caesar. Pompey's reply was as enigmatic as ever, 'unless we can do better' (Appian 2.31), but C. Marcellus was determined to force Pompey's hand and secure his open support. The Senate could resist Caesar only with Pompey's help, and war between them could bring other advantages. If they destroyed each other, the Senate could resume the authority it had enjoyed before their rise. Whether Pompey wanted war is unclear, but he probably did not. He saw his acceptance of the sword as a statement of his own superior position and a sufficient threat to force Caesar into submission. He came to doubt the wisdom of his strategy only days later when Caesar's subordinate Hirtius came to Rome on a flying visit but did not meet Pompey to discuss the situation, 'proof positive of estrangement', according to Pompey, who visited Cicero on 10 December and now 'spoke as if war was inevitable' (*ad Att.* 7.4).

To the Rubicon

During December 50 there was little enthusiasm for war within Italy. Pompey was finding it difficult to raise troops and those he recruited came 'reluctantly and without zest but the greater part cried out for a settlement of the controversy' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 59). Cicero wrote to Atticus (7.7) from Formiae on 17 December: 'I have not found a single person who would prefer to fight rather than give in to Caesar's demands.' Pompey now seemed much more committed to war and, according to Cicero in a letter on 26 December, was 'trusting in his own and the state's troops' and 'seemed not only unwilling to seek peace, but positively afraid of it' (*ad Att.* 7.8).

Curio left Rome to join Caesar in Cisalpine Gaul in December and Mark Antony took up the cudgels as tribune. He came from a noble family and had allegedly passed a largely misspent youth womanising and drinking in the company of other dissolute nobles such as Curio. After Cicero had executed his stepfather Lentulus in 63, Antony had gone on to fight successfully with Gabinius in the East and with Caesar in Gaul. As tribune he employed his considerable oratorical skills on Caesar's behalf, and in December he read a letter to the Assembly from Caesar which proposed that both Caesar and Pompey surrender their commands and disband their armies. He read a similar letter to the Senate in January 49 which Curio had brought from Caesar, but which Cicero described as 'threatening and bad-tempered' (*ad fam.* 16.11). After reminding the Senate of his considerable achievements, Caesar again asserted that he should be expected to lay down his own command only if Pompey did likewise, and appeared to threaten war if his terms were rejected. Metellus Scipio immediately proposed a motion that Caesar should lay down his command or become a public enemy, which was passed by the Senate but was vetoed by Antony and his tribunician colleague Cassius Longinus.

Behind the scenes Caesar was being much less assertive. Cicero was trying to mediate and he urged consideration of a plan, proposed by Caesar, to surrender his Gallic provinces but retain two legions and Illyricum while he stood for his second consulship. This would have given him parity with Pompey within Italy, but would have found him extremely weak if conflict did break out. Plutarch (*Pompey* 59) suggests Caesar made an additional offer to retain just one legion, which Pompey was tempted to accept. His optimate supporters were clearly alarmed to see their champion wavering and reacted strongly. Cato insisted it was a trick and accused Pompey of allowing himself to be taken in; the proposal was rejected. The optimate leaders seized the moment and the Senate passed an SCU which Antony and Cassius again vetoed, in the case of Antony, extremely bad-temperedly. His volatile behaviour, unfortunately, did nothing to reassure those present that his master Caesar would not behave likewise, given the opportunity.

The new consuls for 49 were Lentulus Crassus and Gaius Claudius Marcellus,

known as Major to distinguish him from his cousin of the same name who was consul in 50, and the brother of M. Marcellus, consul of 51. Both consuls were fiercely opposed to Caesar, and Velleius (2.49) described Gaius Marcellus as 'unreasonably savage'. They now led the Senate in a debate which culminated in the appointment of Ahenobarbus as Caesar's immediate replacement in Gaul. Again Antony and Cassius interposed their veto, but Lentulus warned them that their safety could not be guaranteed if they persisted in their opposition. His challenge to the time-honoured sacrosanctity of the tribunes was ill-judged. Although they were not forcibly driven out of the city, Antony and Cassius, accompanied by Curio and Caelius, chose to slip away at dead of night in a hired cart disguised as slaves, and arrived at Caesar's camp at Ravenna on 10 January. Caesar displayed them 'in this condition' (Appian 2.33) to the men of the Thirteenth Legion. Plutarch (*Caesar* 31) wrote that Lentulus had given Caesar 'the best possible excuse to take action and supplied him with excellent material for propaganda among his troops'. When he addressed his men, Caesar was careful to make a distinction between the actions of the Senate and those of Pompey whom, he claimed, had been led astray. The soldiers declared themselves ready to defend the rights of the tribunes and the *dignitas* of their commander, and they started to march towards the border.

Caesar was about to bring a hostile army into Italy, where very few, including Caesar himself, wanted a war. It seems probable that he saw his invasion as part of an ongoing attempt to intimidate his enemies into allowing him to become consul. Caesar could not countenance the idea of returning without *imperium* and facing prosecution, but experience had proved that he could not rely upon Pompey's support. The trust between the two men had now completely collapsed. The optimate senators needed Pompey if they were to meet the challenge of Caesar, and Pompey's personal need for supremacy made him unwilling to placate Caesar. Lucan's argument that Pompey could 'tolerate no equal' (*Pharsalia* 1.125–6) is a partial explanation for the situation Rome now found itself in. Throughout the past two years, Pompey's strategy had been to permit the return of Caesar, but on his terms and only with his support, thus placing Caesar in his debt. Lucan also argued that Caesar could 'tolerate no superior', which would also appear to be borne out by his insistence that he would return to Italy only on level terms with Pompey. Both men expected that the threats they had made and the positions they had assumed would cause the other to back down; each was waiting for the other to blink. Pompey had shown a moment of weakness when was tempted to compromise over Caesar's offer to retain just one legion as a condition of his safe return, but decisive at that point, and surely the key factor which eventually forced conflict, were the leading optimates, men such as Cato, the Marcelli and Lentulus. They had seen Pompey waver and had immediately passed an SCU to ensure war did come, because that was what they wanted. What better outcome than to see the two most powerful men in

the Republic at each other's throats? Velleius (2.49) wrote that Cato had declared, 'it was better for the Republic to die than to accept any terms from a solitary citizen'. The tragedy was that many of the senators who had voted for the SCU did not see it as 'a declaration of war against Caesar, but a prophylactic measure designed to put still more pressure on him and bring him to his senses' (Seager 2002: 151).

Plutarch believed 'Caesar had from the outset formed this design' (*Caesar* 28), and had always intended to dominate Rome, but he also appreciated that Pompey, a man he largely admired, 'had decided to put Caesar down'. While acknowledging the role of the optimates, who 'went beyond all bounds in their efforts to bring dishonour and abuse upon him [Caesar]' (*Caesar* 29), Plutarch saw the war as the result of a struggle for supremacy between two men. He concluded, 'it remained for him who would be greatest to put down him who was, and for him who was greatest, if he would not be put down, to take off ... the man he feared' (*Caesar* 28). Appian also saw the war as the result of a personal power struggle and held Pompey and Caesar equally culpable. He does not fully explore the role of the Senate in the crisis, but suggests that it 'now had suspicions of both, but considered Pompey the better republican of the two, and hated Caesar because he had not shown it proper respect during his consulship' (2.29). Suetonius (30) suggests that Caesar used defence of the tribunes as a convenient pretext, and explores three possible reasons for the war. He discusses Pompey's belief that 'Caesar's own means were not sufficient to complete the works which he had planned, nor to do all that he had led the people to expect on his return'. Faced with the humiliation of such a failure, Caesar preferred to cause 'general unrest and turmoil'. Suetonius also describes Caesar's love of power, and suggests that war was his 'opportunity of usurping the despotism which had been his heart's desire from early youth', but he concludes that Caesar had no option but to fight in defence of his *dignitas* as his enemies would have prosecuted him and destroyed his career.

Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, the river that divided Cisalpine Gaul from Italy, has become the stuff of legend, although few precise details are certain. It was probably the night of 10 January. Caesar was in Ravenna and, after an evening of socialising, he ordered his Thirteenth Legion, the only forces at his disposal, to follow him as he set off in a hired carriage with some fellow officers, including Asinius Pollio, whose account of the Civil War was used by both Plutarch and Suetonius. Caesar reached the bridge crossing the river early on 11 January and deliberated upon the enormity of the action he was about to take, then, using the gambler's phrase 'the die is cast' (Suetonius 32) he crossed, and thus invaded Italy. Caesar had acted quickly and was now the enemy; he had lost whatever moral high ground he could previously claim. He brought only one of his ten legions with him. Although he had recently doubled their pay and his men expected generous parcels of land when the war was over, their loyalty went beyond self-interest. It had been

won in the mud and blood of Gaul, and they had little hesitation in taking arms against fellow Romans to defend the *dignitas* of their general and protect the rights of the tribunes so recently violated. Only one of Caesar's officers, Labienus, chose to leave, which he was allowed to do unimpeded. He had served in Gaul for many years and his reasons for going are not clear in the sources, but he was from Picenum, Pompey's homelands, and probably had close ties with him.

Caesar's precipitate invasion caused panic in Rome and caught Pompey by surprise. The campaigning season was still far off and his own military preparations were just getting under way. He had not been appointed supreme commander, which complicated his position, as he was negotiating with equals rather than giving orders. When news of the Rubicon crossing reached Rome, probably on 17 January, Pompey and many other senior magistrates abandoned the city in such haste that Lentulus forgot, or simply did not have time, to remove the considerable wealth of the Treasury. Dio (41.6) claims that Pompey was forced to evacuate the city as he had not mustered sufficient forces to defend it, and to many, including Cicero, it seemed little better than flight. Remembering the bloody carnage when Sulla and Marius had entered the city, many senators chose to flee with Pompey, but others merely travelled to their country villas to await developments. Caelius chose Caesar, and wrote to Cicero (8.14) in August 50, 'when it's war the military camp espouse the stronger, and hold the side to be best which is strongest'. Opinions differ on whether Caelius had assessed the situation accurately. Caesar had ten legions at his disposal, although not at full strength, and also had access to various auxiliary forces raised in the Gallic provinces; estimates range from 30,000 to 45,000 men. Pompey had the two legions in southern Italy recently returned by Caesar, but their loyalty was dubious, and he had seven untested legions in Spain. In the East, however, Pompey had access to unlimited manpower and resources if he called on his innumerable clients. Pompey had hoped for the luxury of time to prepare forces that would be overwhelming, but Caesar had precipitated events by invading Italy sooner rather than later.

Throughout the weeks following the crossing of the Rubicon, messengers moved between the two sides. Cicero continued to press for a peaceful settlement, but lamented to Tiro, 'an obsessive mania for fighting has got into everyone' (*ad fam.* 16.12). Lucius Julius Caesar and the praetor Roscius both brought messages from Pompey assuring Caesar he had no personal grievance against him and requesting he lay down his command to avoid war. Caesar counter-proposed that Pompey should go to Spain and that both men should surrender their forces. He also pressed hard for a face-to-face discussion, but Pompey was clearly not tempted by this offer. Possibly he feared for his own safety, but he must also have appreciated that his optimate collaborators such as Cato would never accept such a meeting; they did not trust him not to do a deal with his old ally. Goldsworthy concludes, 'Jealousy and suspicion between allies was as much a hindrance to a negotiated settlement as mistrust

between enemies' (2006: 470). Caesar considered the terms put to him, that he return to his province and disband his forces, extremely unfair. He was being asked to surrender whatever advantage he had gained by his invasion and to wait in his province, without an army, for the Senate to decide how to treat him; on their past record this was far from tempting. Caesar recognised it as an attempt to buy time to levy more troops which he knew would be used against him. He therefore pressed on with his attack, taking Picenum, Pompey's own family heartlands, with relative ease as the hill farmers welcomed Caesar unopposed, possibly remembering his past gifts but also demonstrating little loyalty to the Senate, which had not ruled them well.

The Twelfth Legion arrived from Gaul in February to swell Caesar's forces, and his advance south continued largely uneventfully until he reached Corfinium. Ahenobarbus had set out for his new command in Gaul but was now defending the town with about thirty cohorts of raw recruits. Pompey was in the south with the two legions taken from Caesar, and urged Ahenobarbus to abandon Corfinium and join him. The arrival of the Eighth Legion and a further twenty-two cohorts raised in Gaul increased Caesar's military strength, and they began to dig a ditch around the town for a lengthy siege. When he realised Pompey was not going to come, Ahenobarbus planned his own escape but told the townspeople that help was on its way. His own men saw through his plan, and he was placed under arrest while they decided what to do. There were at least fifty senators and equestrians in Corfinium and, led by Lentulus Spinther, they decided to surrender to Caesar. He received them generously and repeated his allegations that he had been unfairly and illegally treated and forced to fight for his political survival, arguing that he wished 'to liberate and avenge the Roman people from the oppression of a minority faction' (Caesar, *Civil War* 1.22). He then let them go. This was the first example of Caesar's *clementia*, mercy, and when he saw it in action Ahenobarbus gave up his own plans to commit suicide and surrendered to Caesar, who allowed him to leave unharmed. The treatment of Corfinium was a propaganda *coup*. Those who remembered the dark and savage brutality of both Marius and Sulla were reassured that Caesar was a very different proposition, possibly preferable to Pompey, once nicknamed The Young Butcher. The legal complexities of Caesar's command and its surrender were not widely understood within Italy, and the expected support for the Pompeians had not materialised. Pompey had stamped his foot to very limited effect.

During February, Pompey informed the consuls he intended to evacuate Italy and take his forces to Greece. At what point he reached this decision is disputed, but the recruitment problems in Italy must have been an important factor. Pompey's best chance of military success was in the East, where he could call upon the vast resources required to mount an overwhelming attack. He had used his legendary organisational skills to gather enough ships to transport his troops to Greece and they reached Brundisium at the beginning

of March. Caesar arrived with six legions on 9 March and built booms to block the harbour, but was unable to stop the evacuation, which took place during the night of 17 March; only two ships were grounded by Caesar's engineering works.

Caesar marched to Rome and summoned the Senate to meet on 1 April. He visited Cicero at Formiae on 28 March and urged him to attend, but Cicero was unwilling to become his instrument and found Caesar harsh and unbending. They parted with cool civility, which encouraged the vacillating Cicero to support the Pompeians, even though he feared 'our Gnaeus is marvellously covetous of despotism on Sullan lines' (*ad Att.* 9.7). A thinly attended Senate met outside the city walls and Caesar sought to justify his own position. He unsuccessfully asked for volunteers to go to Pompey and seek peace, and then appeared before the Assembly, where he also received a muted reception. At best, those he addressed were afraid of him and uncommitted, but his subsequent actions changed many minds and lost him a great deal of support. Caesar needed money to pay for his soldiers, and his Gallic fortune had been spent several times over. He normally requisitioned all he needed but, if he seized supplies from Italy itself, he would alienate those whose support he now sought, so he sent men to the Treasury in the Forum to seize the assets of Rome which, it is claimed, amounted to 30 million *sestertii* and thousands of gold and silver bars. They met resistance from one of the tribunes, Lucius Caecilius Metellus, who blocked the heavily defended door, and blacksmiths had to be brought to break through the bolts, hinges and locks. Plutarch (*Caesar* 35) describes a confrontation between Caesar and Metellus in the Forum which resulted in the tribune backing down in the face of violent threats: as Caesar had paraded as the defender of the rights of the tribunes, his hypocrisy did not go unnoticed.

From Spain to Pharsalus, April 49–August 48

Caesar had left Rome in the spring of 58; now he remained in the city less than a fortnight. It would have been impossible to follow Pompey to Greece immediately because Caesar did not have ships to transport his troops across the Adriatic. His plan was first to defeat the seven Pompeian legions in Spain so that he could move against Pompey without the fear of being trapped in a pincer movement. Caesar jokingly insisted, according to Suetonius (34), ‘I go to meet an army without a leader, and I shall return to meet a leader without an army’. Pompey had not visited Spain since he had been assigned the provinces in 55, preferring to rule through three legates. The scholar Varro was in Further Spain with two legions and the remaining five legions in Nearer Spain were under Petreius and Afranius, who had served with Pompey in the East but failed to shine as consul in 60. They were supported by about 10,000 cavalry and eighty Spanish cohorts and had concentrated their forces near the town of Ilerda.

Caesar deployed three of his legions from Transalpine Gaul to secure the passes through the Pyrenees and ordered three further legions to Spain. Caesar himself set off via the town of Massilia (Marseilles), a former Greek colony, which he had always treated with particular respect. The Massilians closed the gates against him, insisting they wished to be neutral, but they had earlier allowed Ahenobarbus to sail in unchallenged and he was now in charge of their defence. Such a threat could not go unchallenged, and Caesar placed three legions outside the city. A squadron of warships blockaded the harbour and the resultant siege, although it was an irritating necessity, was a drain on his manpower. Caesar rode on, protected by 900 German horsemen, to meet his six legions now arrived in Spain. The five legions of Pompey were in a strong defensive position on a ridge near the town of Ilerda and there had already been one skirmish before Caesar arrived. Initially his campaign in Spain did not go well. Afranius and Petreius knew the terrain well and rainy weather swept away the bridges that Caesar had built to enable the foraging parties to get out to find food and supplies for his soldiers. Caesar’s army was trapped between two rivers and his supply routes were severed, but he was undaunted and, by digging a canal and reconstructing a bridge, was able to turn the tables on the Pompeians who, desperate for their own supplies, were forced to withdraw to the River Ebro, where they found themselves encircled. Caesar pressed home his advantage in a series of attacks until, unable to secure enough supplies to continue, Afranius and Petreius were forced to surrender in early August. Varro then gave up without a fight. Caesar treated them all with *clementia*, and the legions were disbanded without reprisals. Spain was now under Caesar’s control and Massilia eventually surrendered in September, although Ahenobarbus managed to escape a second time.

Affairs had not been going so well elsewhere. Caesar had sent Curio to

Sicily, which he had taken without a fight, but when he crossed to Numidia he was lured into the desert by the forces of King Juba. His infantry were destroyed, and Curio was killed. As Caesar passed through Cisalpine Gaul on his way back to Rome, he received news of a mutiny within his Ninth Legion. They had not yet been paid a promised bounty and the soldiers greatly disliked his policy of *clementia*, which deprived them of the possibility of plunder. Caesar was harsh and uncompromising, and threatened decimation of the entire legion. He relented in response to their impassioned pleas, and eventually only executed twelve ringleaders, chosen by lot. Unsurprisingly there is no mention in Caesar's *Commentaries* of the mutiny, and the Ninth went on to support him loyally for the rest of the war.

While Caesar was fighting in Spain, Pompey assembled his army and added four legions to the five he had brought from Italy. He excelled in logistical exercises on this scale, and summoned troops to his training ground at Beroea in Macedonia. Men from Galatia, Cappadocia and other client kingdoms found themselves distributed among the Pompeian legions, including archers and slingers and 7,000 cavalry which Pompey greatly prized. The infantry 'was a mixed multitude and in need of training', according to Plutarch, and Pompey took a very hands-on approach, 'not sitting idly by, but taking part in their exercises himself' (*Pompey* 64). Pompey's fleet of 500 warships, supported by lighter ships and cruisers, was certainly formidable, and Plutarch concluded, 'his navy was simply irresistible' (*ibid.*). The fleet was commanded by Bibulus, and patrolled the Adriatic coast to prevent grain reaching Italy and to safeguard the Pompeian supply routes. This enormous enterprise was expensive, and Pompey demanded payments from the client kings, raised new taxes in the provinces, called in loans and favours, and also made a large personal contribution. Treasures had been seized, and a mint was set up in Apollonia to strike coins. Cicero, who finally arrived in Greece in June, was expected to contribute one million sesterces; he was still complaining about the effect of this on his personal finances two years later (*ad Att.* 11.3). He had wrestled with his conscience and, although he had been greatly encouraged by Caesar's *clementia*, personal loyalty to Pompey and a belief the Republic would be better defended by the Pompeians had informed his decision; his brother Quintus, who had served as Caesar's legate in Gaul, made the same choice. For a year Cicero's correspondence with Atticus ceased and, again, we lack his distinctive voice.

Caesar had returned to Rome from Spain and planned to become consul for 48 but, as both consuls were in Macedonia with Pompey, it was unclear how the elections could be held legally. There was a precedent, dating from the Second Punic War, for a praetor to appoint a dictator, who was then empowered to hold elections. Lepidus obliged and Caesar became dictator for eleven days, held elections, and became consul with Publius Servilius Vatia Isauricus, a member of the established elite married to a niece of Cato, whose presence in the city and election clearly reflects how many of the Senate

remained uncommitted to this war. Caesar used his power as dictator to hold all the other magisterial elections and also to recall men who had been expelled from Rome in 52 during Pompey's sole consulship. He restored full legal rights to the sons of the proscribed and put measures in place to ease the problem of debt, which had become acute. With the magistrates in place, Caesar laid down the dictatorship and left Rome before officially taking office as consul. He was heading for Brundisium.

The date was January 48, but in recent years the Senate had failed to add in the extra 'intercalary' months required to align the calendar in Rome with the seasons, and it was actually September or October. Caesar planned to use the element of surprise and to invade unexpectedly outside the normal campaigning season. This was a hazardous exercise but surprise had served him well before. Winter was approaching and supplies would be a problem after they landed. Caesar now had twelve legions, and there was still a shortage of suitable shipping to transport them across the Adriatic because so many vessels were now in Pompey's formidable navy. Caesar had managed to secure twelve war galleys, but these were not sufficient to transport all his troops at once. The ships needed to be loaded with as many men as possible, which meant that they could not also carry the supplies that would normally be taken. Repeated journeys would have to be made after the element of surprise had been lost, thus increasing the risks, and those who arrived first would be particularly vulnerable. Caesar's first landing of seven legions took place unopposed on the coast of Epirus, as Pompey's troops were on their way to their winter quarters in Dyrrachium, and Bibulus was caught napping. The ships returned immediately to Brundisium, although the enraged Bibulus was able to capture two of them as they sailed back. Caesar swiftly secured the ports of Oricum and Apollonia and the rest of Epirus, which also supported him: for now the towns in the area supplied his army's needs. Caesar sent an offer of terms to Pompey, who had finally been made supreme commander of the Republican forces. As both sides had suffered losses, Caesar suggested they both dismiss their forces within three days, but Pompey did not reply; to concede now would smack of defeat.

Pompey had rushed immediately to Dyrrachium to prevent Caesar taking the port, and the two armies spent the winter facing each other. Caesar was heavily outnumbered and Bibulus's fleet was effectively preventing the safe crossing of Mark Antony and his four legions. The two armies started to fraternise across the lines, which Caesar encouraged. This greatly alarmed Pompey, and Labienus intervened to stop it. In the spring of 47 Antony landed much farther north than planned because of unfavourable winds, and Pompey was caught between the two sections of Caesar's army. He raced north with Caesar in hot pursuit but, fearing he would be encircled, pulled back, which enabled the two sections of Caesar's army to unite. Realising his mistake, Pompey returned swiftly to Dyrrachium, and the two armies faced each other again, this time with the Pompeians' backs to the sea. Caesar began to build a

fortified wall to entrap Pompey's men, but they found a weak spot which they were able to breach. Caesar's men initially pushed the Pompeians back, but they were outnumbered two to one and were forced to retreat from the port. Pompey failed to exploit this moment of weakness, and Caesar commented, 'Today victory had been with the enemy, if they had had a victor in command' (Plutarch, *Caesar* 39).

Opinion differed in the Pompeian camp about their next course of action. There were three options. Afranius, recently arrived from Spain, argued the time had come to retake the Italian peninsula because 'Italy was the greatest prize of the war' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 66), but Pompey was concerned that any forces they left behind in the East would be extremely vulnerable. A second option was to prolong the war, and Appian (2.10) writes that Pompey was keen to use his navy to prevent Caesar getting supplies by sea, believing they should 'prolong the war and drive his opponents from famine to disease'. Cicero supported this policy but it was completely unacceptable to most of Pompey's key supporters who, according to Seager, 'were burdened with debts and needed victory to restore their fortunes' (2002: 166). They accused Pompey of protracting the war to hang on to his command and nicknamed him 'Agamemnon' and 'King of Kings' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 67). Cicero found their attitude offensive, playing with the word *boni*, the good men, which they used for themselves, concluding there was nothing good about them, apart from their cause. Pompey allowed himself to be persuaded into the third option of swiftly bringing Caesar to battle. Cicero was unwell and remained at Dyrrachium but he wrote that Pompey's judgement had left him and that he was no longer thinking as a general. He had succumbed to that weakness of character that had always dogged his career. 'Pompey was a slave to his own idea of glory and could not bear to hear the reproaches of friends, who now forced their will upon him and dragged him along after them, so that he became a servant of their hopes and impulses and abandoned his own best-laid plans' (*Pompey* 66). Seager concludes, 'at last Pompeius gave way, and for personal and political reasons chose the course which he knew was militarily unsound, to stake everything on a single battle' (2002: 167). Once he had acceded to their demands, Pompey's optimate supporters assumed their victory was certain and Ahenobarbus, Scipio and Lentulus Spinther started squabbling about who would become the next *pontifex maximus*.

The Pompeians had forgotten that Caesar was no ordinary adversary. He had retreated to Thessaly, where the crops were now ripe in the fields, and had faced little resistance, especially after he had allowed his men, very uncharacteristically, to sack the town of Gomphi, which had refused to co-operate. His men vented their spleen unchallenged, and plenty of food and an opportunity to rest gave everyone a chance to recover their fitness. Pompey waited for the arrival of his father-in-law Metellus Scipio and his Syrian legions, and then marched into Thessaly to meet Caesar at Pharsalus. The only extant contemporary account of the battle is Caesar's own, in which he

claimed that his army of 22,000 men and 1,000 cavalry faced a Pompeian force of 47,000 infantry and 7,000 cavalry, led by Labienus. Even if Caesar's tendency to exaggerate is taken into account and Pompey's forces were not so large, he was still heavily outnumbered. Caesar attempted to give battle on each of the next three days, but Pompey did not respond. Pompey's troops had the advantage, as they were placed on a slope overlooking a broad, flat plain bordered by the River Enipeus, and Caesar, therefore, decided to move his own forces farther north. On 9 August a heavy morning mist hung over the plain as Caesar's men prepared to abandon camp but, as the sun broke through, Pompey's army moved on to the broad plain of Pharsalus. He drew his eleven legions into a line about 2 km wide, flanked to the right by marshy ground and about 600 cavalry, and to the left by the remaining 6,400 cavalry. Pompey's plan, urged on him by the overconfident Labienus, was to use the cavalry to strike through Caesar's own cavalry and wheel around behind the Caesarian lines. Caesar's forces would be trapped between the cavalry at the rear and the infantry advancing from the front. Pompey hoped to end the battle swiftly with as little loss of Roman life as possible.

Caesar gave orders to abandon their departure and take up battle positions, which his well-trained men did swiftly and impressively. He had observed the concentration of cavalry on Pompey's left flank and placed his own cavalry opposite with eight cohorts of infantry behind, carefully concealed from view. Caesar had also issued specific orders. When Labienus led the Pompeians' cavalry charge, Caesar's cavalry immediately broke ranks and fell back. The Pompeians were confronted by the javelins of Caesar's infantry which they used as spears, stabbing and jabbing at the men and horses and creating confusion, until 'they turned and fled most shamefully' (Plutarch, *Caesar* 45). This enabled Caesar to encircle their left flank. Pompey's infantry line had been ordered to stand firm, which they were able to do for a while, but then Caesar brought his third line of fresh troops forward who had not yet fought, and the Pompeians struggled to continue in the midday heat. The allied auxiliaries Pompey would normally have used in such a situation had run away when they saw the cavalry routed, and now the entire Pompeian army broke ranks and fled back to camp or to the hills. Pompey had been observing the battle from horseback and Caesar claimed he fled the battlefield when he saw his cavalry attack fail, although Appian (2.81) wrote that he did not leave until he also saw the infantry rout. Pompey returned to camp, and when news came of the defeat, seized a horse and, accompanied by Lentulus Crus, Lentulus Spinther and Favonius, fled, and 'for the first time, in his old age, got experience of defeat and flight' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 73). The first town Pompey reached was Larissa, and he told its inhabitants to throw themselves on Caesar's mercy: he was clearly not going to stay and fight on. He continued by riverboat to the coast, and eventually crossed to Mytilene and to his wife and son.

Pompey's extraordinary behaviour was unexpected. Dio argued that he was

destroyed by the failure of his cavalry and lost all judgement (42.1) while Appian concluded that he became 'bereft of his senses' (2.81). The poet Lucan later insisted Pompey abandoned the battle to prevent any further loss of Roman life, and it would appear that Caesar had the same aim, ordering his men to target foreign auxiliaries in Pompey's fleeing army rather than Roman citizens. Caesar claimed he lost only 200 of his own men at Pharsalus but that 15,000 Pompeians had been slain and 24,000 captured, with the eagles of nine legions. Pollio's figure of 6,000 casualties is probably closer to the truth. Plutarch (*Caesar* 46) says that Caesar stood among the Roman dead declaring: 'They would have it so; they brought me to such a pass that if I, Caius Caesar, after waging successfully the greatest wars, had dismissed my forces, I should have been condemned in their courts.'

The Battle of Pharsalus was a disaster for the Pompeians. Pompey failed because his men lacked the discipline and loyalty that were the hallmark of Caesar's legions, which performed much better on the day. Although Pompey's strategy was sound and would probably have succeeded against most enemies, Caesar responded immediately and flexibly and counteracted the devastating potential of Pompey's cavalry. Pompey was a great general, but on the field of Pharsalus he faced a better one and lost.

‘A dead man does not bite’

Pompey left Mytilene with Cornelia and sailed to the coast of Pamphylia, where he was joined by sixty senators who had escaped the battle and by several triremes. He crossed to Cyprus and learned that Syria and Rhodes had both gone over to the Caesarian side and that Cato, who had remained in Dyrrachium and had not been present at Pharsalus, had taken his forces to Numidia to join Juba. Pompey's fleet was largely intact and, although he reproached himself for fighting a battle so far from the sea and not being able to make better use of his formidable navy, he made no attempt to reform his army in Greece and now looked for a 'temporary refuge and retreat' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 76). It was agreed he would not be safe in any of the Roman provinces or with any of the client kings who had also been defeated at Pharsalus. Pompey favoured Parthia, but his senatorial supporters were horrified, describing the Parthians as 'a most treacherous race'; the question of Cornelia's safety at the Parthian court was also raised. The protection of King Juba in Africa was suggested, but Egypt was only three days away, and Pompey allowed himself to be persuaded that this was his best option. After the death of Ptolemy Auletes the kingdom had passed to his young son Ptolemy XIII, who was now about thirteen years old, and his daughter Cleopatra VII, who was about twenty. They had married, as was the Egyptian custom, but their factions at court had quickly come into conflict, and Cleopatra had fled Alexandria. She had just gathered an army and re-entered the country. It was pointed out that Auletes had owed his throne to Pompey and he could now lend his support to the young king in return for royal protection. As Caesar was in hot pursuit, Pompey had to decide quickly, and his small flotilla set off for the Egyptian coast.

The three powerful Egyptian officials who were ruling on behalf of the young Ptolemy, Pothinus the eunuch, Theodotus of Chios, the young king's tutor, and Achillas, his military commander, now summoned the council to consider what to do about Pompey. Theodotus pointed out:

If they received Pompey, they would have Caesar for an enemy and Pompey for a master; while if they rejected him, Pompey would blame them for casting him off, and Caesar for making him continue his pursuit; the best course, therefore, was to send for the man and put him to death, for by doing so they would gratify Caesar and have nothing to fear from Pompey. To this he smilingly added, we are told, 'A dead man does not bite'.

(Plutarch, *Pompey* 77)

The decision seemed clear. On 28 September, the day before or after

Pompey's sixtieth birthday (the sources disagree), his small flotilla came within sight of the Egyptian shore and observed enough activity on the beach to believe a welcome was being prepared. Achilles and Septimius, a Roman who had served with Pompey against the pirates and with Gabinus in Egypt, sailed across in a small fishing boat to pick Pompey up. They explained that the depth of the water made it impossible for Pompey's own ship to get any nearer, which seemed credible, and Pompey climbed on board and set off for the shore. He may well have known he was walking into a trap but went anyway, accompanied by an ex-slave Philip and a servant, Scythes. Cornelia watched in horror as Pompey took Philip's hand to stand for landing and Septimius ran him through from behind with his sword. Pompey covered his face with his toga and 'without an act or a word that was unworthy of himself submitted to their blows' (*Pompey* 79). His head was cut off and his body cast naked into the sea. The watching flotilla immediately turned and fled. Philip later took Pompey's body and cremated it on the beach and returned his ashes to Cornelia for burial on his Alban estate. It was an ignominious end.

When Cicero heard of Pompey's death, he focused on mourning him as a man rather than as a political leader. He wrote to Atticus (11.6): 'I cannot but grieve at his fall. I knew him to be an honest man, pure and venerable.' Pompey had largely shaped the empire that Augustus would later rule, had fought in three continents and had mastered the Mediterranean, and Pliny the Elder later eulogised Pompey as the architect of Rome's empire. He was a master of organisation, and a thorough and competent commander, although his career was littered with military mistakes as well as successes. Gelzer (1968) argues that Pompey was limited as a general because he did only what he was sure of, whereas Caesar tried the impossible, which made him greater. Tacitus judged Pompey harshly, arguing that 'the goal was always dominion' (*Histories* 2.38), and historians have long disagreed about his real intentions. The general tone of Augustan literature was largely pro-Pompeian, and Augustus encouraged the portrayal of Pompey, Cicero and Cato as heroes of the Republic. Pompey was later placed in a much more favourable light than Caesar, and in Lucan's *Civil War*, written during the reign of Nero, he emerges as one of the heroes of the poem, alongside *libertas*, the Senate and the Republic itself, while Caesar is portrayed as a dominating and dangerous personality. Lucan relied heavily upon the letters of Cicero for information, and Cicero's conclusion that both men aspired to kingship informed many later evaluations.

Both Velleius and Lucan dwell upon the idea that Pompey could not tolerate an equal and Caesar could not tolerate a superior, but it is important to qualify this statement with a reminder that Pompey never wanted to seize power. He expected it to be granted to him, and had, therefore, always accepted that this was at the discretion of the Senate. He respected the Republic and did not wish to destroy it, but his arrogance convinced him that his achievements were commensurate with powers and honours that would

make him *princeps civitatis*, leading citizen, whose *auctoritas* could not be challenged. Pompey relished that position of pre-eminence and was always ready to be called upon to defend the interests of Rome. Leach argues that, if Pharsalus had gone in his favour, Pompey 'would have been content with a position within the framework of the Roman constitution rather than above it' (1978: 212). Unfortunately the optimates disliked his personality and achievements and, consequently, always approached him reluctantly. They despised the position he had attained, paradoxically because they had been forced to employ his considerable skills themselves.

Pompey's career had been unorthodox. His achievements had raised him above all others and his commanding position had challenged the principle of *primus inter pares* and the integrity of the Republican system. Unfortunately many of his enemies in the Senate could not overcome their prejudices sufficiently to appreciate that Pompey had always fought in their defence; 'he and the aristocracy never learned to accept and trust one another' (Seagar 2002: 172).

10

THE IDES OF MARCH, 44

The Alexandrine War, October 48–June 47

Caesar was on the island of Rhodes when he learned that Pompey had reached Cyprus. He assumed that he would head for Alexandria and therefore embarked the remnants of two of his legions and 800 cavalry and, guarded by ten fully manned and armed Rhodian warships, set sail for Egypt in October 48. Caesar reached the Pharos lighthouse at the entrance to the harbour of Alexandria about three days later, where he was met by an Egyptian ship carrying Ptolemy's tutor Theodotus, who presented Caesar with Pompey's head. Caesar refused to look and 'turned away with loathing, as from an assassin' (Plutarch, *Pompey* 80), merely taking Pompey's signet ring and shedding some tears; they had once been close and Caesar must have hoped to have the opportunity to pardon him.

Ever since Gabinius had restored the despised Auletes to the throne in 55, the Romans had been very unpopular in Egypt. If the Egyptians harboured any hopes that Caesar would be deterred by Pompey's assassination and leave immediately, they were to be disappointed, and Caesar landed at the royal dock. He was accompanied by the twelve lictors normally assigned to a Roman consul, and the jeering Egyptian crowd took offence at this appearance of power and attacked some of his legionnaires. Caesar now found himself drawn into Egypt's own civil war between Ptolemy XIII and his sister Cleopatra and, although he claimed in his *Civil War* (3.88) that unfavourable winds gave him no option but to stay, it is more likely he was assessing a level of involvement which would bring him financial advantage. Caesar took up residence in a royal palace and placed his troops in buildings in the grounds. He faced a hostile population and a potential military threat from the Egyptian forces commanded by Achillas and sent a fast ship to his general Domitius Calvinus in Asia with orders to join him as quickly as possible with two legions.

As Auletes had never paid the agreed fee for his restoration, Caesar informed the Egyptian official Pothinus that he intended to collect 40 million sesterces. The eunuch was not prepared to co-operate and Caesar's soldiers were offered 'the oldest and worst grain' (Plutarch, *Caesar* 48), to indicate that Egypt could not even afford to support them. It was at this point that Cleopatra, now twenty-one, made her appearance. Little is known about her early life, and even her legendary beauty is impossible to corroborate from the images that exist, but it is known she was well educated and extremely intelligent, and Dio wrote that she was very beautiful (42.34). Cleopatra was an articulate and shrewd political operator; if she was also attractive that was another weapon in her considerable arsenal of talents, and she now took a great gamble. Under cover of darkness she was smuggled into the harbour of Alexandria and, concealed either in a roll of bedding, a laundry bag or carpet, was unrolled at the feet of Caesar in 'a pity-inducing guise', according to Dio

(42.34), or because she was 'a bold coquette' (Plutarch, *Caesar* 49). This colourful episode is absent from Caesar's own account of the Alexandrine War. He mentions Cleopatra's name only twice and then merely as Ptolemy's sister, but their affair, which appears to have started immediately, may have determined his decision to remain in Egypt and to fight. Their relationship was conducted in Greek, a language in which both she and Caesar were fluent, as she did not speak Latin. When Caesar next met Ptolemy XIII and his advisers it was with Cleopatra at his side. The king was infuriated by their new relationship, as was the crowd outside, and Roman troops had to be used to calm them; Cleopatra was clearly as unpopular as her Roman lover. Nevertheless agreement was reached that Ptolemy XIII and Cleopatra should rule jointly as their father had wished while his other two children, Princess Arsinoe and Ptolemy XIV, now about eleven years old, were to rule Cyprus as a separate kingdom which would be returned to Egypt.

Pothinus and Ptolemy XIII had no intention of abiding by the terms agreed, and ordered the Egyptian commander Achillas to bring their army of 20,000 to Alexandria immediately to deal with this upstart Roman. The war which ensued took five months to conclude and pinned Caesar down in Egypt. Achillas needed first to march south and then north to Alexandria, as the Nile delta was impassible, which gave Caesar time to take the initiative, imprison the three royal siblings and execute the duplicitous Pothinus. His 4,000 Roman forces captured the Pharos lighthouse, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, and gained control of the entrance to the Great Harbour of Alexandria, which facilitated the arrival of the reinforcements summoned from Asia, Rhodes and Cilicia. Although Caesar's own account ends at this point, the events were well documented by his aide, Hirtius, in his *Bellum Alexandrinum*.

From Hirtius we learn that the fighting reached a stalemate. Princess Arsinoe escaped from the palace and, with the support of her adviser Ganymedes the eunuch, was proclaimed Queen. She joined up with the army but quickly fell out with Achillas, had him murdered and replaced with Ganymedes. The Egyptians now prepared siege towers, ten storeys high, from which their artillery pounded Caesar's troops in the palace compound; they also blocked the channels that carried fresh water into the palace. Caesar's situation was deteriorating when news came that one legion had arrived with plentiful supplies of artillery and grain and an additional twenty-five warships, but they were becalmed eight miles from harbour. Caesar set off to tow them in. Ganymedes seized the initiative and set sail in pursuit with a dozen warships but, in the ensuing battle, several Egyptian ships were captured and 'if nightfall had not put an end to the battle, Caesar would have captured the whole enemy fleet' (*Civil War* 11.3–6). Despite this setback, the Egyptians rebuilt, and in early January 47 Caesar prepared his thirty-four vessels for battle. Again the Roman ships prevailed but, during a fierce engagement on Pharos Island, the Roman legionnaires lost their discipline and fled. Caesar

had to ditch his own boat and swim for safety with a packet of papers in his teeth. The Egyptians salvaged his cloak from the water and put it on display as a trophy of battle (Plutarch, *Caesar* 49). The costly engagement resulted in Roman losses of 400 infantry and as many sailors.

The Alexandrine War was taking much longer than Caesar had anticipated, and in February he released Ptolemy. He had urged him to end the war as quickly as possible, but the young king joined forces with his sister Arsinoe against Caesar. Many of Caesar's men felt that his 'excessive kindness had been made absurd by the deceit of a boy' (b. *Alex.* 24), but it would seem unlikely Caesar had allowed himself to be deceived. He had just received the news that an army was approaching overland from Syria, led by Mithridates of Pergamum, adopted son of Mithridates the Great, and including 3,000 Jews from Judaea led by Antipater, father of Herod the Great. The Egyptians decided to divide their army to meet this challenge and moved the majority of their forces Eastwards. Caesar left a garrison in Alexandria but despatched most of his men by sea to rendezvous with the new army. In the ensuing battle the Egyptian forces were routed, Ptolemy XIII drowned attempting to escape by river and Arsinoe was captured.

The Alexandrine War had certainly not been Caesar's finest hour. Jimenez writes 'Caesar himself had reason to be relieved after six months on the wrong end of a siege, dodging and defensive the whole time, calling for help for the first time in his life, and finally being rescued by a foreign army' (2000: 184). In March 47, Cleopatra was restored to the throne with another brother, Ptolemy XIV, and Arsinoe was sent to Rome as a prisoner. Cyprus was returned to Egypt, either to supply the money Caesar sought from the Egyptians or possibly as an insult to Cato, who had settled it as a province. Hirtius suggests that Caesar now returned to his war against the Pompeians, but that is not the case: he spent two months cruising the Nile with Cleopatra. Appian (2.90) wrote that they were accompanied by 400 vessels and most of the army, which would suggest it resembled a royal progress to demonstrate the realities of the new regime. Suetonius viewed the episode more romantically: 'he would have gone through Egypt with her in her state-barge almost to Ethiopia, had not his soldiers refused to follow him' (52). When Caesar left Cleopatra in June 47 she was six months pregnant with their son Caesarion. Three legions remained in Egypt under the command of Rufio, the son of one of Caesar's freedmen. He was possibly chosen as an acceptable compromise, as Egypt was not a province; Rufio was not given the status of a legate and he bore no resemblance to a governor. The reality was that Caesar had spent seven months in Egypt, fighting a difficult war unrelated to his campaign against the Pompeians and then taking an extended holiday. It was time to deal with the consequences.

‘Veni, vidi, vici,’ June 47–June 46

In a letter to Atticus in June 47 (11.17a) Cicero complained that no one had heard from Caesar for six months. This was uncharacteristic, as he normally maintained close contact and, although an enemy blockade at the beginning of the Alexandrine War had made communications difficult, the silence continued even after Caesar had reopened the harbour. His continued absence from Rome was already causing problems and lack of information increased uncertainty. Debt was the most pressing social and economic problem, and the policies Caesar had introduced in 49 were not proving effective. There was urgent need for measures to alleviate the severe hardship of many in the city, and others were stepping in to take political advantage, as it was still not certain that Caesar would return in victory. Caelius, Cicero’s correspondent, who was praetor in 48, announced that he would cancel all debts and instigated riots in Rome against Caesar’s measures, but the Senate passed the SCU against him, and both Caelius and Milo, who had come out of exile to lend him support, were killed.

While Caesar was fighting in Egypt the civil war had continued in other theatres. Quintus Cornificius, Caesar’s commander in Illyricum, had moved south immediately after Pharsalus to take over Dyrrachium and the Macedonian coastline and, with the assistance of Vatinius, cleared the Adriatic of enemy warships and secured control for Caesar. The news was not so positive elsewhere, as the Pompeians had regrouped in Caesar’s absence. Metellus Scipio and Labienus had fled to King Juba of Numidia and established a new base at Utica. Cato had abandoned Dyrrachium and joined them there. Pharnaces II, a son of Mithridates, had also taken advantage of Caesar’s absence. He had been given the Cimmerian Bosphorus, the Crimea, as his own kingdom after his father’s death, and was now attempting to regain all his father’s lands. He had invaded Lesser Armenia and Cappadocia and had moved towards Bithynia-Pontus. Caesar’s commander in the region, Calvinus, had sent two of his three legions to Caesar in Egypt and hastily raised four more legions in Pontus and Cilicia. When he attacked Pharnaces, near Nicopolis in Eastern Turkey, Calvinus was heavily defeated and forced to flee. Pharnaces entered Bithynia-Pontus unchallenged, committing atrocities, including the castration of all captured Romans, as he reclaimed his father’s territories.

In October 48, after the battle of Pharsalus, Caesar was made dictator for a year, and Mark Antony, Caesar’s Master of the Horse, who had brought the victorious army back to Italy, returned to Rome to take control on Caesar’s behalf. Plutarch (*Antony* 9) alleges that he resumed his dissolute lifestyle and seized property for himself and his drinking companions, and reports Cicero’s opinion that Antony’s behaviour made him generally detested. In 47 Publius Dolabella, who had followed Clodius’ example of plebeian adoption, became

tribune and introduced a Bill to reduce rents and abolish debts. He had served with Caesar at Pharsalus and was Cicero's son-in-law, but when he attempted to use armed men to force the measure through, the Senate passed the SCU and appealed to Mark Antony to enforce it. Unfortunately unrest had spread to Caesar's legions in Campania, and Antony had to restore order there first before attending to the situation in Rome, and the violence in Rome escalated during his absence. Antony brought a legion into the city and fought a pitched battle in the Forum, killing hundreds of Dolabella's men and hurling some of the ringleaders from the Tarpeian Rock. Antony's injudicious response caused great anger in the city and Caesar must have regretted his hasty decision to put him in charge; his own presence was urgently needed.

Caesar received news of these events in Rome when he arrived at Antioch but, as Pharnaces was his priority, he sailed on to Tarsus, and in both cities pardoned any Pompeians who approached him, including Quintus Cicero and Cassius Longinus. In August 47 Caesar's army encountered the army of Pharnaces outside Zela, a walled town in north central Turkey. While his men were still preparing camp on a hill about a mile from the town, the enemy advanced towards them. The Romans hastily abandoned their spades and entrenching tools to grab their weapons, but did not have time to get into battle order before the king's chariots, armed with scythes, came charging towards them. Caesar's forces were heavily outnumbered, but their opponents were fighting uphill and, although surprise had gained them the initial advantage, Caesar's men were able to push them back down the slope, and many retreating soldiers fell on top of those who had already fled or been killed. Caesar now pressed home the advantage and seized the enemy camp and treasure and, although Pharnaces escaped the battlefield, he was later killed by rebels. It was a great victory; Caesar would later adapt the words of Terence, the comic dramatist, and boast 'Veni, vidi, vici', 'I came, I saw, I conquered'.

Rome now awaited Caesar's urgent attention. Settling matters in Asia on the way, he set off for Italy and arrived at Tarentum on 24 September. Cicero was impatiently awaiting Caesar. He had been in Brundisium since October 48, when he had abandoned the Pompeians, much to the fury of his brother Quintus, and Antony had ordered him to remain there until Caesar's return so that he could personally ask for a pardon. Cicero rushed to meet Caesar and was greeted with friendship and forgiveness, and 'after this he continued to show him honour and kindness' (Plutarch, *Cicero* 39).

When Caesar re-entered Rome at the end of September he still retained the power of dictator which had been granted to him for a year. Rival gangs roamed the streets and Caesar's first task was to restore order; he introduced punishments for rioting and also distributed food throughout the city. Caesar refused to cancel debts, although he did cancel all interest payments incurred since the beginning of the war and removed the first 2,000 sesterces owed by tenants in the city and the first 500 sesterces owed by tenants in the

countryside, which took the edge off the misery of the most desperate. Caesar's dictatorship was coming to an end, and he appointed consuls, Calenus and Vatinius, to rule for the last months of 47, and increased the number of praetors from eight to ten, filling the magisterial offices with his supporters and packing the Senate with *equites* who favoured his cause. Caesar stood for the consulship of 46 with Marcus Lepidus; there were no other candidates. Lepidus, unlike Antony, could be relied upon to represent Caesar in his absence with diligence and loyalty. Caesar sidelined Antony for the next two years because of his extreme behaviour but he pardoned Dolabella, much to Antony's disgust. Caesar had confiscated Pompey's property, which was now put up for auction. Men such as Antony and Dolabella paid, and were seen to pay, a fair price, and there was no repetition of the abuses of the Sullan auctions.

When he had dealt with the most pressing problems and bolstered up the political system with his supporters, Caesar prepared to leave for Africa. He had started to raise an army but had encountered resistance from his own legions, who had returned to Italy after Pharsalus but had still not received the land they had been promised. They had become mutinous, refused to go to Sicily as ordered, and marched on Rome to take up the matter with Caesar personally. After a night of violence, Caesar confronted them in the Campus Martius, where they demanded release from service, hoping this would encourage him to hand over their bonuses. Caesar, insultingly, addressed them as civilians, not soldiers, and agreed to their demands, but said they would be paid only after he had been victorious in Africa and only after the Triumph of the new army he was recruiting. The message was clear: he did not need them. The veterans had expected him to appeal to them for loyalty, now they pleaded to serve him again; he had engineered an impressive turnaround and had the army he needed.

Caesar left Italy for Africa in November with six legions and 2,000 cavalry. Details of the campaign are contained in *Bellum Africum*, written by an unknown author, possibly one of Caesar's junior officers; the language is not elegant enough to have been Caesar's own. He crossed to the African coast and, after bad weather scattered his fleet, finally regrouped in early January at Lepcis Magna. Caesar focused his energies on securing supplies and more troops, and the arrival of four more legions increased his fighting force to 30,000 men. While he was out on a foraging expedition, Caesar was unexpectedly attacked by the cavalry of Labienus, the officer who had left his side before he crossed the Rubicon. Petreius brought infantry to assist Labienus and Caesar's position was perilous, but he managed to repel the attack and retreat to his base.

Caesar built a fortified camp on the coast, awaiting further reinforcements. The Pompeian forces of eight legions and 3,000 cavalry, led by the arrogant Scipio, had joined up with Juba's army of fourteen legions, 18,000 cavalry and 120 war elephants; together they were formidable. The Pompeians also

had thirty-two untrained elephants, a gift from King Juba. Elephants usually carried three or four men and were used like tanks in battle, particularly to terrify the cavalry. Caesar appreciated their potential and, during January, he requisitioned elephants from various Roman entertainments which he used to train his men. By April 46, actually mid-winter by the solar calendar, more legions had arrived and Caesar had 35,000 men, 4,000 cavalry and 2,000 archers and slingers. He was ready to end the Civil War. By night, Caesar headed for the supply port of Thapsus, held by the Pompeians, forcing Scipio to follow. The dramatic battle that followed ended in a rout of the Pompeian forces which was hastened by the untrained elephants, which panicked and stampeded through their own lines during the battle. Although Caesar had ordered his men to take prisoner all who surrendered, his troops had very different ideas. They were war-weary and massacred 10,000 Pompeians as they pursued them after the battle; they also murdered some of Caesar's officers who attempted to restrain them. Scipio fled but later committed suicide, as did Juba, who fought Petreius to the death in a suicide pact. Labienus fled to Gnaeus, Pompey's son, who was gathering forces in Spain and, at the urging of his troops, Caesar executed Sulla's son Faustus and Afranius. The war in Africa was over. Juba's kingdom of Numidia (modern Algeria) became a new province, Africa Nova, and Caesar appointed Sallust as its first governor.

Cato had remained at Utica during the battle and the townspeople, who had no wish to fight on, now prepared to welcome Caesar. Cato was not prepared to accept Caesar's *clementia*, which he knew would be offered. He argued that Caesar did not have the right to make the choice between life and death because 'he is acting illegally in saving, as if he were lord and master, those whom he has no right to lord it over' (Plutarch, *Cato* 66). Dio (43.10) wrote 'he [Cato] regarded Caesar's pity as more hateful than death'. Cato retired to his room after dinner and, after reading an account of the death of Socrates (Dio 43.11 says it was *Phaedo*, Plato's book on the soul), stabbed himself. Unfortunately the wound he inflicted was not mortal and his son summoned a doctor to treat it. Cato ripped open the stitches and pulled out his own entrails. He was forty-eight years old.

Cicero admired Cato's integrity but thought he lacked tact and judgement, and had despaired of his obduracy, which had done so much damage to Rome. His tunnel vision had forced Pompey to take refuge with Caesar and Crassus in the Triumvirate, and then had driven Caesar to war. The manner of his death made him a martyr to the cause of freedom and the Republic, but his inability to compromise must place him among those responsible for its fall. When Caesar entered Utica he 'declared he was angry because Cato had begrudged him the opportunity of sparing such a man' (Dio. 43.12); nothing would have pleased Cato more.

Caesar the reformer, July 46–October 45

Caesar returned to Rome in July 46 via Sardinia which, Cicero sarcastically commented, was ‘one of his properties that he has not yet inspected’ (*ad fam.* 9.7). Dio (43.15) records a speech he made to the Senate in which Caesar insisted that he had no desire ‘to play the tyrant over you’, and wished to secure ‘prosperity with honour’. The senators may have believed his words or may have feared his intentions, but now they showered him with powers: a ten-year dictatorship, a three-year appointment as Prefect of Public Morals with censorial powers over the senatorial rolls, the right to speak first in the Senate, to select future magistrates, and to sit beside the consuls. Apparently other powers were offered but Caesar declined them (Dio. 43.14). He also received unprecedented honours: there were forty days of celebrations of his victories and seventy-two lictors to mark his three dictatorships (a dictator had twenty-four lictors), he was proclaimed *parens patriae* and was to wear a laurel wreath and the *toga picta*, the purple toga of triumph, at all times. His name was inscribed on the Capitoline temple of Jupiter and his statue was placed inside, mounted on a globe, on which he was described as a demigod.

Caesar now celebrated four separate Triumphs, over Gaul, Egypt, Asia and Africa. Each lasted one day but the timing was staggered between 21 September and 2 October, which prolonged the unforgettable spectacle. Carts, filled to overflowing with silver and gold, were paraded through the streets with placards announcing the countries Caesar had conquered and his achievements during each war. Hundreds of prisoners were displayed, including Vercingetorix, a prisoner since his capture in 52, who was strangled after the Triumph. Caesar spared Princess Arsinoe of Egypt and Juba’s four-year-old son, who were also paraded. According to Plutarch (*Caesar* 55) feasts were held in the evenings, at which 20,000 dining couches were provided, plays were performed, games held and beast hunts were staged. Rome was packed for the spectacles with many visitors camping along the streets, even on the rooftops, and some were killed, crushed by the pressure of the crowds. An artificial lake was created and a naval battle staged, and the festivities concluded with a re-enacted battle between two armies, each with 500 infantry, thirty cavalry and twenty elephants. Caesar gave 400 sesterces to every plebeian, as well as gifts of oil and wheat (Suetonius 38) and, when his soldiers complained that he had shared their spoils, he beheaded the ringleaders but gave every legionary 20,000 sesterces, more than he could earn in sixteen years of service; there were no further complaints about his largess.

While Caesar had been in Greece during the autumn of 47, Cleopatra had given birth to a son, Ptolemy Caesar. The name Caesarion appears in the Roman records, but only after Caesar’s death. Although Caesar never acknowledged the child, and Caesar Octavian later disputed the child’s

paternity, he did bring Cleopatra to Rome in late 46 and she lived in one of Caesar's own villas across the Tiber, where their affair probably continued. The presence of the exotic Egyptian queen was extremely unpopular. Dio reflected that he 'incurred the greatest censure from all because of the passion for Cleopatra ... For she had come to the city with her husband [Ptolemy XIV] and settled in Caesar's own house so that he derived an ill repute on account of both of them' (43.27). The queen was exotic and threatening and her influence on Caesar was a cause of concern. Many important Romans visited her, including Cicero, who complained of her haughtiness. More worrying were the rumours that Caesar planned to move the capital, possibly to Alexandria, and take her as his queen.

Cicero was more optimistic than he had been for a long time. Caesar appreciated he would need all the support he could muster to maintain the stability he was attempting to restore and was consistently lenient with old enemies. Cicero often acted as intermediary to secure a pardon and the restoration of their property, and many old faces had returned to the city. Caesar could be very conciliatory, as in the case of M. Marcellus, consul in 51, who had worked so hard for Caesar's recall from Gaul and was now in proud and stubborn exile in Mytilene, unwilling to request a pardon himself. The Senate appealed to Caesar, who demonstrated his customary *clementia*. Although Cicero had been regularly attending the Senate, his voice had been silent since his return to Italy. He had come to believe the Republic had been broken and was now irreparable, but offered genuine thanks to Caesar in the *Pro Marcello*. Cicero urged Caesar to restore Republican government and heal the damage of Civil War, but we have no record of Caesar's response. Cicero did not speak publicly on the matter again.

Now he was back in Rome Caesar worked indefatigably on a broad range of legislation, assisted by Oppius, a close friend, and Balbus, a wealthy naturalised Spaniard who acted as his private secretary. His wide-ranging activities can be interpreted positively, indicating that Caesar had a good grasp of the problems of the Republic which he began to address through legislation. It is equally possible to conclude that his broad-brush approach merely demonstrated willingness to make changes. Caesar had an obligation to his veterans and began to settle them, but not just in Italy. Entire legions were settled in overseas colonies such as Carthage, which was now rebuilt. This enormous task was still under way when he died. Caesar established twelve new citizen colonies to reduce the population in Rome and offer opportunities throughout the Empire. It has been estimated that 80,000 benefited from this scheme, settling as far apart as Spain and Bithynia. Caesar had already extended Latin rights to the native upper class in Gaul, Sicily and Spain. His actions in regard to the Empire would suggest he had a vision of Rome that extended far beyond the city itself. Caesar wrote in the *Civil War* (3.57) that he wished 'tranquillity for Italy, peace for the provinces and security for the empire'. Many of his political opponents still regarded Rome

as the city, possibly as the city and Italy, but Caesar's travels and wars had convinced him that Rome was now 'city and Empire', and that the benefits of belonging to it should be shared more fully among all its inhabitants.

It has been estimated that the population of Rome was now about one million and, since Clodius had introduced free grain, the number in receipt of the dole had increased to 320,000. Caesar now reduced the figure to 150,000, which eased the financial pressure on the Treasury. Some of those removed from the lists would have moved to his new colonies, others would have found work on his building projects. Another job creation scheme was the stipulation that one-third of all herders on estates must be freemen, not slaves, which created more jobs for the poorer peasantry. Perhaps to mitigate the effects of the emigration of such large numbers to the new colonies, he set up a system of incentives to encourage families to have more children. Caesar extended his law of 59 concerning the appointment of provincial governors; *propraetors* were to serve no longer than a year, *proconsuls* no longer than two years. Although these laws were partly designed to prevent anyone else having the same opportunity he had enjoyed in Gaul, even his enemies recognised them as sensible and long overdue.

The Roman legal system had long needed reform and Caesar started a full codification which was far from complete on his death. He introduced a system of fixed and more severe penalties for major crimes, the punishment for *vis* and *maiestas* was exile, and he changed the jury composition to an equal split of senators and *equites*. Laws were passed to ban the *collegia* again, which had been the centres of so much public disorder. A new set of sumptuary laws were passed to restrict the ostentatious spending on luxuries such as banquets by many of the nobility. He also encouraged doctors and teachers to move to Rome with the offer of citizenship and placed Varro in charge of establishing a Roman library which he hoped would rival that of Alexandria.

Caesar's most enduring reform was his new 365 day calendar, which he introduced as *pontifex maximus* in January 45 after two intercalary months of sixty-seven days had been added to bring Rome into step with the solar system. It was based on a system devised by the Greek Sosigenes, and remains the basis of all subsequent Western calendars. Caesar had already embarked upon his great building plans for the city. As well as bolstering his own prestige, his many projects provided employment in the city. The *Saepta Julia*, the marble voting enclosure on the Campus Martius, was still under construction; now work also began on the Forum of Caesar, the new Senate House called the Curia Julia, and the Basilica Julia. Plans also were prepared to rebuild Ostia, Rome's port, and to drain the Pomptine marshes and the Fucine Lake to provide more agricultural land, although none of these schemes had started before his death.

The remaining Pompeians had gathered in Spain under Gnaeus Pompey, Pompey's eldest son, and Labienus, a bitter enemy of his former general.

Towards the end of 46 Caesar set off to face them in what would prove to be his final campaign, leaving Lepidus, his Master of the Horse, in charge of the city, assisted by eight prefects and Oppius and Balbus. Details of the campaign are found in the anonymous *Bellum Hispaniense*, probably written by one of Caesar's officers. The Pompeians had about thirteen legions swelled with Spaniards who had rallied to the Pompeians because of the greed of the governor, Q. Cassius Longinus; Caesar had eight. The decisive battle was fiercely and closely fought on a plain near the walled town of Munda in March 45. It lasted for several hours and Appian (2.104) describes Caesar in the ranks, bravely rallying his troops, and comments, 'it was reported that he said that he had often fought for victory, but that this time he had fought even for existence'. Labienus was killed and Gnaeus was eventually caught and beheaded by Caesar's cavalry. It was the final battle of the Civil War.

Marcus Brutus, who had married Cato's daughter, Porcia, had written a eulogy of his uncle shortly after Cato's death in 46. During Caesar's absence in Spain, Brutus and Atticus put pressure on Cicero to write another but, as Cato had opposed everything Caesar represented, this required tact and delicacy. Cicero wrote to Atticus (12.4) that it would be impossible to write something that did not discuss all Cato had done to predict the present crisis or his suicide. Cicero's eulogy is no longer extant, but he seems to have emphasised Cato's qualities rather than his political views. Caesar wrote a reply on his way back to Italy, and commended Cicero for his style, although his own version, the *Anti-Cato*, was far from complimentary to his subject.

Caesar returned to Rome in October 45 and celebrated his unpopular fifth and final Triumph, which 'vexed the Romans as nothing else had done' (Plutarch, *Caesar* 56), as it was awarded for a victory over fellow Romans. Nevertheless the honours continued to flow, and Caesar was granted the right to wear a laurel wreath, the titles *liberator* and *imperator* were permanently added to his name, and his statue was placed on the Capitol beside those of the kings of Rome. Another statue was to be carried next to those of the gods in the procession that marked the opening of the games, and yet another statue was placed in the temple of Quirinus. A ten-year consulship was added to his ten-year dictatorship (Dio. 43.42–5) and the elections were held for the magistracies of 45, as there had not been time to do so before his departure for Spain. Caesar had many followers, particularly army officers, whom he was anxious to reward, and fourteen praetors were elected for the remainder of the year, with another sixteen elected for the following, as well as forty quaestors and another forty for 44. The word 'elected' is used here loosely, as Caesar had been granted the right to nominate magistrates. In practice a list of his recommended candidates would be read to the relevant voting assembly, which would vote the candidates in, giving the illusion of a fully functioning Republican electoral system. One of the powers granted to Caesar was the right to appoint new senators, and he used it to increase the size of the Senate to a potentially unwieldy 1,000. Many pompeians had returned and retaken

their seats, such as Cicero, Brutus and Cassius, but most of the new recruits were of equestrian rank, and Caesar also included men from important Italian families and some Gallic tribal leaders. The enlarged Senate could no longer be a place for constructive debate and, increasingly, decisions were taken behind closed doors by Caesar and his two assistants Oppius and Balbus, neither of whom were senators. Caesar's policies and laws were always presented correctly, using normal Republican procedures, but the senators had little input, which caused resentment and enmity.

During 45 Caesar decided to mount yet another military campaign, this time against the Parthians. The defeat of Crassus remained unavenged, there were standards to be recaptured, and Caesar started to prepare sixteen legions in Greece. The campaign was expected to last three years, and he planned to leave in March. Caesar would be accompanied by his eighteen-year-old great-nephew Octavian, son of his niece Atia, who had spoken at Julia's funeral in 54, and Mark Antony, with whom he was reconciled, and who was his fellow consul for 44.

‘Caesar had to suffer Caesar’s fate’, October 45–15 March 44

Billows concludes that Caesar was assassinated because of:

the way he held power, and the nature of his wielding of power, both in the past, since the outbreak of the civil war, but more importantly the way in which the conspirators understood that Caesar planned to hold and wield power in the future.

(Billows 2009: 237)

To this must be added the reaction of the traditional ruling elite to the honours with which he was showered and his plans to leave Rome to engage in another lengthy military campaign.

At the end of 45 and at the beginning of 44 Caesar was granted yet more honours. His head and the title *parens patriae* were put on the coinage, the first time a man had been honoured in this way, and his house was to have a pediment, an architectural feature normally reserved for temples. Caesar’s birthday was declared a public holiday, the month Quintilis was renamed Julius in his honour, and a temple was to be built to his *clementia*, with Antony appointed his priest. Only gods such as Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus had such a *flamen*. Caesar received tribunician sacrosanctity, according to Dio (42.20) and implied in Appian (2.118), the right to sit on the curule chair that indicated high office and to wear triumphal clothing on all occasions. Statues of him were to be placed throughout Italy and, according to Appian (2.106), also in the provinces. Shortly after all these honours had been granted, Caesar was sitting in the Forum Julium at the Temple of Venus when a number of senators approached to announce that his new honours were to be inscribed on gold and silver tablets. Caesar failed to rise at their approach, which was indignantly interpreted as an insult to the Senate and the people of Rome (Suetonius 78). Although Caesar claimed to have been ill, his decision to walk home shortly afterwards did little to undo the damage caused. Caesar looked unwell after his return from Spain and it is likely that he was suffering an increasing number of epileptic seizures. He may have given a truthful response, but to many of his critics such behaviour clearly signalled his contempt for traditional Republican rule.

Caesar had started to flout the traditional election procedures. During 45 he was the only consul and, on his return from Spain in October 45, he handed his power over to Trebonius and Fabius, appointing them consuls without holding elections. This caused great resentment, but when Fabius died on the last day of December and Caesar appointed a friend, Caninius, consul for one

day, there was anger. Such behaviour demonstrated that Caesar felt no need to respect the rules. His power to nominate the magistrates who would rule during his absence in Parthia was a further cause of annoyance.

The obvious question to ask is why Caesar was granted so many powers and honours if his accumulation of both was bitterly opposed by many in the Senate. Plutarch (*Caesar* 57) writes that the Senate turned to the rule of one man as a respite after the economic and political instability of the Civil War: 'the Romans gave way before the good fortune of the man and accepted the bit', but, after the appointment of Caesar as *dictator perpetuus*, dictator for life, which took place early in 44, Plutarch argues, Caesar's power became tyrannical, as it had become permanent. His flatterers, according to Plutarch, had competed with each other to grant 'excessive' honours, presumably in the hope of personal benefit, but he adds that even Caesar's enemies joined in the competition to grant him honours, 'thus rendering Caesar odious and obnoxious even to the mildest citizens because of the pretension and extravagance of what was decreed for him' (*ibid.*). Dio (44.7) supports Plutarch's views, writing that Caesar's enemies 'wished to make him envied and hated as quickly as possible, that he might sooner perish'. Suetonius comments that 'he [Caesar] behaved with wonderful restraint and clemency' during and after the Civil War, but he finds fault with Caesar because he 'allowed honours to be bestowed on him which were too great for mortal man' (Suetonius 76).

The issue of whether Caesar wanted to be *rex* and was craving royal rule, *regnum*, dominated the first months of 44. In January he had celebrated the Latin Festival just outside the city and was hailed *rex* by someone in the crowd as he rode back. Caesar made light of this, as *Rex* was a Roman surname, punningly retorting, 'I am Caesar and no king' (Suetonius 79). Any comfort his enemies may have taken from his response was undone when, shortly afterwards, a laurel wreath bound with a white ribbon, similar to the diadem (headdress) worn by Hellenistic kings, was placed on the head of a statue of Caesar on the Rostra (Appian 2.108). When two tri-bunes ordered it to be removed and jailed the man who had called Caesar *rex*, he reacted angrily and dismissed them both, even though it was illegal. The crowd were furious, calling the tribunes 'Brutuses', thus linking them with the Brutus who had expelled the last king, Tarquinius Superbus. The affair greatly angered Caesar, and Suetonius (*ibid.*) speculates that this was either because the tribunes had been dismissive of the idea of Caesar as *rex*, or because he was not given the chance to reject it.

In February the festival of Lupercalia took place in the city. It celebrated fertility, and young priests ran through the streets in loincloths, carrying shaggy thongs of goatskin with which they flicked the crowd, especially pregnant women who sought an easy delivery and infertile women who hoped to conceive. Mark Antony was leading the priests who arrived at the Forum where Caesar was sitting on a gilded chair, wearing a purple robe and the high

red shoes of the Etruscan kings. Mark Antony offered him a diadem. According to Plutarch (*Caesar* 61), 'there was applause, not loud, but slight and not spontaneous'. Caesar brushed it away and 'all the people applauded'. Mark Antony then offered the diadem a second time and there was very little applause, but when Caesar rejected it again, according to Appian 'they roared with delight and applauded him for not accepting the diadem' (2.109). Plutarch detects the hand of Caesar behind this affair, and concludes 'the experiment had failed'. If Caesar was testing the water, the people had made their feelings very clear, but the rumours persisted. A prophecy was discovered in the Sibylline books that Parthia could be conquered only by a king. Did Caesar want the Senate to make him king before he left in order to ensure victory in the war? Caesar's powers and honours had been unacceptable to many senators; the possibility of *regnum*, anathema to Republicans, was the final straw.

The initiative for the assassination of Caesar was probably taken in February by Cassius, who recruited his brother-in-law Brutus, a descendant of that Brutus who had driven out the last king. The two men had fought on Pompey's side at Pharsalus, had been pardoned by Caesar and were both praetors in 44. Brutus had an ongoing link with Caesar because his mother Servilia had been Caesar's mistress, but he was also Cato's nephew. About sixty senators were drawn into the plot but only twenty-six are known by name. Some were part of Caesar's own entourage, such as Decimus Brutus and Trebonius, others he had pardoned for their part in the war. As well as the concerns shared by all the men about the growing power of Caesar, the nature of that power and what it represented for the Republic, many must have had personal reasons to wish Caesar dead. Cassius had not been offered a role in the Parthian campaign and may have resented this; Brutus had divorced his wife Claudia in June 45 and married Cato's daughter Porcia, much against his mother's wishes. Porcia was also the widow of Bibulus and was aware of the plot; her influence upon Brutus may have been an important factor in his decision.

There are few of Cicero's letters surviving from 44 and none at all from the first three months. Those from 45 show Cicero's growing concern about Caesar's intentions. The increased powers and the honours which appeared to draw him closer to the gods alarmed Cicero, who believed that Rome was in the grip of a tyrant. He took no action himself but his delight in the assassination reveals the depths of his opposition to Caesar. As early as 49, Cicero (*ad Att.* 8.16) had identified Caesar's 'artful clemency', which had so offended Cato and caused rancour and resentment. Those who had been forgiven found themselves in a subservient position to their pardoner; many found it an uncomfortable place. Cicero had also pointed out other aspects of Caesar's rule that the ruling elite found difficult to accept, particularly his apparent disregard for Republican procedure, and had written in his *Republic* that it was the duty of citizens to fight against tyranny for the greater good.

The assassins believed they were following these ideas, convinced that the Republic could live again only after Caesar's death.

The nobility believed it was their right to rule Rome as the descendants of those who had ruled in the past. The system of *primes inter pares* was a way of sharing that power among them, but Caesar had now reached an unassailable, autocratic position, akin to *dominatio*, the relationship between a master and his slave. As well as achieving continuity of power, his manner of exercising authority undermined the traditional Republic institutions and thus debased them. Many of the old ruling elite had been passed over in Caesar's new arrangements. There were a large number of new men who now held office as consuls and praetors, such as Sallust, from the Italian aristocracy, and there were new senators from Italy and newly enfranchised Cisalpine Gaul. Suetonius (80) reported that someone put up a poster with the title 'Long live our commonwealth!' in the city suggesting that no one should give directions to the Senate House to any of these new senators. In recruiting such men and extending citizenship Caesar was actually reviving the Roman practice of expanding the Roman citizen body which had been suspended in the 180s when the senators had closed ranks, but his actions challenged the exclusivity of the ruling elite and its stranglehold on the institutions of the late Republic. When Caesar was given the right to nominate magistrates he was able to end the destructive competition which had pervaded politics and had led to increased bribery and corruption in elections, but this power effectively removed the hope of political success from all but his closest supporters and those he chose to pardon. Caesar increased the number of jobs available and created more opportunities for office, but that also reduced competition. He used his right to nominate magistrates to reward his supporters and the new senators he had created, but the old elite were squeezed out of the system for the foreseeable future. They had to watch while men they believed unfit to rule colluded with Caesar's way of doing things.

The reforms themselves and the manner of their introduction also indicated that Caesar had little respect for the workings of the Republic and its traditional institutions, although the volume of his legislation could equally suggest that he just proceeded as quickly as possible to do as much as possible, which resulted in less senatorial involvement than they had been used to; whatever the reality, appearance was all. The scale and scope of Caesar's honours presented problems for many, and the ubiquitous symbols of kingship and divinity must also have been hard to accept for those who had fought alongside him and knew that he was just a man. The power he had amassed was also now fundamentally unrepublican. The dictatorship, originally a time-limited emergency measure, had been turned into a permanent feature of government that far exceeded its use by Sulla. Caesar had been granted it four times. The first, in 49, had lasted only eleven days and the second a year, from autumn 48 to autumn 47, but his ten-year dictatorship in the spring of 46 had been superseded in early 44 by the office

dictator perpetuus, dictator for life. Caesar was reported to have said that ‘the state was nothing, a mere name without body or form’, and that Sulla had been a fool when he laid down the dictatorship (Suetonius 77). The conclusion his enemies had drawn was that Caesar intended to hang on to the office and exercise firm, autocratic rule over Rome, as the Republic itself was now moribund. The Roman nobility could accept the temporary need for such control, but such prolonged domination was unacceptable; it could end only with his death.

Caesar planned to leave Rome on 18 March to join his army in Greece and then to travel to Parthia. The conspirators knew their best chance of killing him was before he left, particularly because he had, supposedly, recently dismissed his bodyguard and lictors, insisting that he had lived long enough. This would make the task easier, and there was no desire to wait until his return. Caesar ruled strongly and assertively while he was in the city, and his forthcoming absence would create another period of uncertain government. Caesar’s regime succeeded by the force of his will and was at its most acceptable in his presence, however unwelcome that was. He could dispense office to his many supporters, but power rested in his hands. If he was not there, Rome would be better ruled if the institutions of the Republic were restored fully. Jimenez concluded, ‘Caesar failed as a statesman because he had no vision of how Rome should function, except at his bidding, and allowed no one to govern it but himself’ (2000: 241). Caesar had made the judgement that his type of regime was the best for Rome, and he had been successful. Rome was, according to Goldsworthy ‘better run than it had been for decades, even if things were not being done in the traditional way’ (2006: 615). Caesar had seriously underestimated how much the old way of doing things mattered to others.

The Senate was due to meet on 15 March, the Ides. They were now meeting in the portico of the Theatre of Pompey, Rome’s largest stone building, used routinely since the Senate House had burned down in 52. The conspirators had disagreed about who should die on the Ides. Some had urged that supporters of Caesar such as Antony should also be killed, but Brutus argued that, if they were claiming that their action was tyrannicide, only the assassination of Caesar could be justified, as he and he alone was the tyrant. Brutus’s strong arguments prevailed. There are many stories about the hours leading up to Caesar’s assassination. Both Caesar and his wife are said to have slept badly on the night of the 14th. The previous evening, at dinner with Lepidus, the conversation had turned to the matter of the best kind of death, and Caesar had declared, ‘that which is unexpected’ (Plutarch, *Caesar* 63). During the night it was said that all the doors and windows had flown open, waking Caesar, who saw that Calpurnia, normally a very phlegmatic woman, was having a nightmare in which she saw either the murdered body of her husband or the house collapsing around her. According to Suetonius, Caesar also had a dream in which he was ‘flying above the clouds, and that he was

clasping the hand of Jupiter' (81). Calpurnia insisted that the morning sacrifices were repeated several times and, when the omens were unfavourable, Caesar sent a message to the Senate that he would not attend that day. Decimus Brutus, one of the assassins, was with Caesar, and he ridiculed the signs and prophecies and told Caesar he must attend the Senate, as they were intending 'to vote as one man that he should be declared king of the provinces outside of Italy, and might wear a diadem when he went anywhere else by land or sea' (Plutarch, *Caesar* 64). He led him out into the street, where Caesar encountered a soothsayer (seer) who had previously warned him about the Ides of March and greeted him with the words "Well, the Ides of March are come," and the seer said to him softly, "Aye, they are come, but they are not gone" (*Caesar* 63). On the way to the Senate, Artemidorus, a Greek teacher of philosophy, handed Caesar a document warning him about the plot and urged him to open it. As so many people wanted to talk to him, Caesar did not have the opportunity to read it, and he was still holding it when he entered the portico of Pompey's theatre, where the Senate were waiting.

Accounts of the events in the Senate House are far more credible. The plotters had arranged to keep Mark Antony outside, as he was physically very strong and would have undoubtedly attempted to protect Caesar. The Senate rose in Caesar's honour as he entered, and some of the assassins gathered behind him as he took his place on his golden chair. They had concealed their daggers in the cases where they stored their long stylus pens. Tillius Cimber had prepared an appeal on behalf of his brother in exile which he brought before Caesar, accompanied by some of the other plotters. The choreography was complete and Caesar found himself surrounded by the men who had agreed to take his life. When Caesar impatiently brushed him aside, Tillius Cimber grabbed Caesar's toga, which was the signal, and the attack began. The first blow was thrust into Caesar's neck by Casca, one of the tribunes, but Caesar was able to turn and grabbed the knife. Others now weighed into the attack and, according to Plutarch:

Those who were not privy to the plot were filled with consternation and horror at what was going on; they dared not fly, nor go to Caesar's help, nay, nor even utter a word. But those who had prepared themselves for the murder bared each of them his dagger, and Caesar, hemmed in on all sides, whichever way he turned, confronting blows of weapons aimed at his face and eyes, driven hither and thither like a wild beast, was entangled in the hands of all, for all had to take part in the sacrifice and taste of the slaughter.

(Plutarch, *Caesar* 66)

When Caesar saw that Brutus also had drawn his dagger, he covered his head

with his toga and sank to the ground, reproaching him with the words ‘You too, my child?’ (Suetonius 82). In the clamour to attack him, some of the assassins had stabbed each other by mistake (Plutarch, *ibid.*; Appian 2.117). Caesar had received twenty-three wounds, but the post-mortem suggested that only the wound in the chest had been mortal. He had fallen next to the pedestal of the great statue of Pompey that dominated the portico of his theatre. Caesar remained there until three of his slaves lifted his body into his litter and took him back to Calpurnia.

Burying Caesar

It is very hard to reconstruct the events that followed Caesar's death. We know in outline the most important developments, but the details, and the order in which things happened, which is crucial to know if we are to understand how the struggle for power was won and lost, are very different in the different sources. There are few letters of Cicero from immediately after the murder; many sources are late and they are wildly inconsistent in their dates, figures and other factual information.

Plutarch tells us (*Caesar* 67) that, once Caesar was dead, Brutus stepped forward, intending to make a speech to the Senate to explain why they had killed Caesar, but the senators ran out and fled to their homes. As well as panic there may also have been horror from those not involved in the conspiracy. All places where the Senate met had to be consecrated, and this chamber was in the same building as a temple of Venus. Caesar had been awarded tribunician sacrosanctity, offering him the same god-given protection from attack that the tribunes enjoyed, earlier that year. As Appian puts it (2.118), 'the murderers had perpetrated their gloomy crime in a sacred place, on one whose person was sacred and inviolable'. This is obviously a pro-Caesar view, but it is likely to reflect the feelings of many people at the time.

Antony, the surviving consul, hid in someone else's house, slipping off his toga before leaving Pompey's Theatre and going through the streets in disguise, as an ordinary man, according to Plutarch in *Brutus* 18; as a slave, the same writer says in *Antony* 13. Lepidus, the Master of the Horse, had a legion in Rome under his command; at night he occupied the Forum (Dio 44.22). Lepidus was in an unusual position, because, as Caesar's deputy in the dictatorship, he had command of troops in Rome, unlike Antony, but the position of Master of the Horse ceased to exist when the dictatorship ended. With Julius Caesar dead, Lepidus had no official power, while Antony continued to have the legal *imperium* of a consul. Lepidus was also due to leave Rome before long for his provinces of Nearer Spain and Gallia Narbonensis (the part of Transalpine Gaul that already belonged to Rome before Caesar's conquests of the 50s¹). Dio (44.34) claims that Lepidus, with troops behind him, wanted revolution, while Antony, who had no soldiers to call upon, was forced over the next few days to take a more moderate line and do deals with the conspirators. The claim that Lepidus was plotting violent disorder may come from propaganda against him after he later clashed with the future emperor Augustus, but it is true that there was an odd and unstable balance of power between the two men who were closest in political power to Caesar: Antony had the position, Lepidus had the soldiers.

The conspirators, or 'Liberators' as they claimed to be, made their way from Pompey's Theatre to the Capitol, protected by gladiators and waving their daggers. As the bewildered people of Rome were running about, bolting

themselves into their homes, climbing on to the roofs ready to fight, or taking the opportunity to do some looting, the conspirators shouted at them that liberty had been restored. They tried to remind the People of Brutus' ancestor, who had driven out the last king of Rome. Some responded to the conspirators' invitation to join them. One was Dolabella, the tribune of 47, who had fought on Caesar's side in the Civil War and had been chosen by Caesar himself to take a suffect consulship when Caesar left Rome for Parthia. However, Dolabella had quarrelled with Antony, and Antony had used his authority as an augur to declare that he could not become consul because of bad omens. Dolabella needed support against Antony, and saw a chance to get it from the conspirators.

Whatever Antony was expecting when he hid himself, he need not have worried. Brutus had persuaded the conspirators not to kill Antony. He has been accused of being naive, but his policy was practical: with Caesarians in the most important magistracies and in charge of many provinces, and with all the troops and veterans who followed Caesar, the conspirators were in danger of instant destruction if they took on not just Caesar but all his supporters. The conspirators sent people to negotiate with Antony and Lepidus straight away.

They do not seem to have had any plans: Plutarch (*Brutus* 18) says only that after the death of Julius Caesar 'it had been firmly decided ... to summon all to the enjoyment of liberty'. The conspirators apparently did not understand it when the people did not immediately cheer their actions. This response can be viewed as showing a poor grasp of the political realities. While Caesar may not have been regarded by all the people as their hero and champion, a return to collective government by the Senate is likely to have had very little appeal to them. 'Freedom' for the Senators to compete for power meant pressure on the poor to vote for their patrons, and might well result in a return to the terrible violence of the 50s when Clodius and Milo's gangs had roamed the streets. The senatorial government could not keep order, and it did not have the money to pay for the running of the city, public buildings, or wages and pensions for those who became soldiers. Only the *principes* like Caesar had the resources and the power to do these things for the people. Brutus and his friends could or would not offer them any freedom that was meaningful to them.

On the next day, 16 March, Brutus, encouraged by his supporters, came down with other conspirators from the Capitol into the Forum. Brutus made a speech and the people listened in silence which, in Plutarch's view 'showed ... that while they pitied Caesar, they respected Brutus' (*Caesar* 67), but they may simply have been in shock. Or they may have been bored: Brutus had a cold and intellectual style of public speaking. Brutus later wrote the speech up and sent it to Cicero, who commented to Atticus (15.1a.2): 'The speech is a most elegant composition ... But if I had been handling the material I should have put more fire into it.' The praetor Cinna, who was not a conspirator, also spoke at this meeting; he surprised the crowd by throwing off his *toga*

praetexta, the symbol of his power, shouting that his praetorship was the gift of a tyrant (Appian 2.121). For this naked abuse of Caesar he was heckled angrily, and the conspirators were forced to run back to the Capitol.

During the night, Caesar's widow Calpurnia sent Caesar's money and papers over to Antony, and Antony issued an edict summoning the Senate to meet before dawn on the 17th. The conspirators themselves stayed away; Cinna came, but had to be saved from the anger of the citizens by Lepidus' soldiers.

The supporters of the conspirators, known as Republicans because of their determination to avoid a monarchy, wanted Caesar declared a tyrant. This would result in his being denied public burial, his body being dragged to the Tiber, his will being declared invalid, his property confiscated and his laws being declared null and void. Antony reminded the senators that many of them owed their current positions, and some appointments already made for the future, to Caesar, and if his rule was going to be declared unconstitutional and his decisions invalid, they would have to resign their magistracies, provinces and army commands. Dolabella, who was probably older than twenty-five (as Appian claims in 2.129) but had certainly not reached forty-two, the legal minimum age for the consulship, was one of many who realised that they would lose office and had no chance of being re-elected to it because their appointments were irregular or because they did not have support in the assemblies. Antony had wisely decided to drop his objection to Dolabella's consulship. Dolabella quickly changed his position, arguing against the Republicans.

Antony then warned the Senators that to declare Caesar a tyrant and annul his decisions would cause a breakdown of order throughout the Empire and lead to violence from the veterans. He proposed that all of Caesar's laws should remain in force and that any measures which might be found among his papers which, it could be assumed, he had intended to bring before the Senate, would also be made into law. However, Antony also proposed an amnesty: the conspirators' lives should be spared and those who held magistracies should continue in office.

Cicero spoke in this debate. The conspirators had not invited him to join them, according to Plutarch (*Cicero* 42) because they did not trust him to have enough courage; however, Dio (44.20, 46.22) says that as they went through the Forum after the murder they were calling Cicero's name. At any rate, he was known to support the conspirators; he now proposed to put Antony's compromise to the vote, and it was carried.

The resolutions of the Senate were read out to the people in the Forum. Brutus, Cassius and the others on the Capitol were invited down, and the sons of Antony and Lepidus were sent up as hostages. The crowd demanded that the consuls Antony and Dolabella shake hands with the conspirators; Antony invited Cassius to his house. Lepidus invited Brutus: although the two men were now on opposite political sides there was a family friendship between

them from the time when their fathers had revolted together against the Sullan settlement, and Lepidus' wife, Junia, was Brutus' half-sister.

The dating of the reconciliation to 17 March comes from Plutarch (*Brutus* 19). Appian (2.142) dates it to the morning of the reading of Caesar's will in the Forum, but he has probably moved the events to make a dramatic contrast between this happy scene and the anger and violence that followed the reading of the will.

On 18 March the Senate met again; this time, Brutus, Cassius and other conspirators were present. The Senate gave thanks to Antony for preventing the outbreak of civil war, but also praised the conspirators. Antony and Piso, Caesar's father-in-law, demanded a public reading of Caesar's will and a public funeral.

On 20 March the consuls summoned a meeting of the Assembly. A number of foreigners were also in the Forum that morning. However, it would be naive to view what happened next as a spontaneous outpouring of love for Caesar from the people of Rome and the Empire. The Forum was filled with Caesar's veterans, who were certainly upset by the murder of their old commander but who also wanted their needs to be met and were determined to make a show of strength.

Caesar's will was opened and read. He had left a great deal of money to the people (300 sesterces to every adult male citizen in Rome), and his gardens were also given to the public. There was anger when people heard that Decimus Brutus, a supporter of Caesar in the civil war but later one of his murderers, had been named as an heir.

Next, Caesar's body was carried through the Forum, with the twenty-three stab wounds visible, and laid upon the Rostra, and Antony started delivering the eulogy. According to Suetonius (84) he had a herald read out the oath that the whole Senate had sworn to keep Caesar safe, then added 'a very few words'; even Cicero in his great attack on Antony in *Philippics* 2 (90–1), although he complains about Antony being overemotional, does not imply that the speech was very long. However, according to Plutarch (*Antony* 14), Appian (2.144–5) and Dio (44.36–49), he made an increasingly impassioned speech, then held up Caesar's tunic, ripped and covered with blood, driving the crowd wild. We should treat this dramatic account of events from these later writers which, of course, inspired Shakespeare, with some caution: Antony probably did not yet feel secure enough of his support to risk such a grand gesture. Emotions, however, were clearly running high, and the people in the Forum snatched anything wooden that they could find and started a fire, cremating Caesar's body on the spot. There was an unlucky man, a poetry-writing tribune and supporter of Caesar, who happened to be called Cinna; he went to see Caesar's funeral to pay his respects and was mistaken for the praetor Cinna and killed by the crowd. Then people rushed to the conspirators' houses with torches, to burn them, and tried without success to find and kill the conspirators themselves. The Senate later arrested the men

who had attacked the conspirators' houses, but they let those who had killed poor Cinna go free. Responding to the violence, they gave Antony a bodyguard, and he generously allowed the conspirators to have bodyguards too.

In late March or early April provinces were assigned to the consuls. Dolabella was given Syria, and with it the command of the war against Parthia that Caesar had planned. Antony got Macedonia, which gave him six crack legions that Caesar had gathered there for the war. Lepidus and Antony showed that they intended to work together: Antony married his daughter to Lepidus' son and arranged to have Lepidus made *pontifex maximus*, giving the election to the colleges of priests instead of the People. Lepidus left Rome and went to his provinces.

The conspirators did not give up trying to win support. They promised that Caesar's veterans would get the plots of land assigned to them, and that they would even allow them to sell the land, which Caesar had forbidden. At the same time they promised to pay compensation to anyone who was thrown off his land to make way for the veterans. They promised the soldiers and the people that they would not abolish any of Caesar's laws or confiscate any property. But Cicero wrote on 11 April that they were 'prisoners in their houses' (*ad Att.* 14.5). A few days later, Brutus and Cassius and the other conspirators went to southern Latium; since Brutus and Cassius were praetors and magistrates were not normally allowed to be absent from the city, Antony arranged for the Senate to give them special permission to leave. Decimus Brutus also left, to be governor of Cisalpine Gaul with its three legions, an appointment made by Caesar. The conspirators were not the only ones to flee Rome: Cleopatra also decided that life was too uncertain in the city and had gone back to Egypt by the middle of April.

Measures were taken to lessen conflict and preserve public order. Very soon after Caesar's funeral, according to Cicero (*Philippics* 2.91) the Senate, on Antony's proposal, abolished the dictatorship and made it illegal even to table a motion to appoint someone dictator. It outlawed the carrying of weapons by anyone except soldiers, and veterans who had already had their allotments of land assigned to them were quickly sent out to their colonies. The departure of the conspirators calmed things down. An impostor claiming to be Marius' grandson and Caesar's cousin, who had been stirring up riots, was arrested in mid-April; Antony had him executed without trial. Later that month, during Antony's absence from Rome, Dolabella overturned the altar and column that had been put up in the Forum for the worship of Caesar, and put down riots by Caesar's supporters, executing the ringleaders.

Antony is alleged to have got his hands on 700 million sesterces, which had been deposited in the Temple of Ops on the Capitol (Cicero, *Philippics* 2.93). This was not the same as Caesar's personal funds. It may have been money from the confiscation of Pompey's property, or some of the money set aside for the war against Parthia. Antony had limited funds by the end of this year,

so Cicero's claim must be treated with great caution, but it may be that he had taken the money and spent it on settling the veteran soldiers. Cicero also states (*ibid.*) that Antony, who was 4 million sesterces in debt on 15 March, had cleared this debt by the beginning of April, but that can be accounted for by the money and patronage that had been passed on to Antony from Caesar. Antony had secured the very useful support of Caesar's secretary, Faberius, and Plutarch (*Antony* 15) and Dio (44.53) state that Antony inserted many forgeries into Caesar's documents, creating laws of his own invention. He gave out favours, making political appointments, recalling exiles and freeing prisoners, granting freedom, citizenship and client kingdoms, selling land and exemption from taxes. All of these things he claimed were the wishes of Caesar, recorded in his papers, though the laws had never been formally proposed. According to Cicero, Antony did not allow the tribunes to exercise their vetoes on these matters. There is almost certainly some exaggeration here, but equally there is no doubt that Antony was bending some rules.

Antony left Rome around 21 April for Campania, going to Capua and nearby Casilinum, where new colonies were being founded for Caesar's veterans. In both places there were colonies there already, and the one at Casilinum was only a few years old, so the area was being heavily burdened. Capua fought strongly against Antony's settlements, and it took him nearly a month to put down their resistance.

Antony had gained the upper hand over the conspirators and established himself as the leader of the Caesarians. He probably did not expect serious trouble on his return to Rome and, if he did, he probably did not guess where it would come from.

The sudden son

In his will, as well as leaving money and property to the people, Caesar had, of course, named his heirs. Antony, a relative of Caesar, is said to have expected to be named as his main heir, and to have been disappointed when he saw the will. Caesar had no legitimate sons or grandsons. His closest male descendants were three nephews or great-nephews, Gaius Octavius, Lucius Pinarius and Quintus Pedius. At the age of seventeen, Octavius had joined Caesar for his campaign in Spain in 45, and had obviously made a big impression on his great-uncle, who allowed him to ride in his carriage with him, appointed him a priest (Velleius 2.59) and made him a patrician. According to Appian (3.9) and Dio (43.51), Octavius was to be Master of the Horse in 44; this is confirmed by the *Fasti Capitolini*, a list of magistrates. He would share the office with an unnamed other man, an unusual arrangement, perhaps because Octavius was unusually young. In his will, Caesar left three quarters of his estate to Octavius, while Pinarius and Pedius had to make do with one eighth each.

The will required Gaius Octavius to take Caesar's name, so he became Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus; but, in fact, he deliberately left out the name 'Octavianus' and called himself Gaius Julius Caesar. Octavian is the name given him by all modern historians, to distinguish him from Julius Caesar, and so it would cause confusion not to use it here, but leaving out 'Caesar' hides the fact that he presented himself as Caesar's adoptive son; therefore, in this book, he will be called Caesar Octavian.

In March, Caesar Octavian was in Apollonia in Illyria, with the army gathered for the Parthian expedition. He was in the company of two good friends from Italian equestrian families, Quintus Salvidienus Rufus and Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa. Soon he was to be joined by another close ally, Gaius Maecenas. He set off for Italy and found enthusiastic support from Caesar's veterans, who expressed frustration with Antony for failing to get revenge on Brutus and Cassius.

By 21 April, Caesar Octavian was in Puteoli, near Naples, at the house of his stepfather Lucius Marcius Philippus. Under Roman law, an heir could decline to accept his inheritance, and Philippus and his mother Atia wanted him to do so. He met with the consuls appointed for 43, Hirtius and Pansa, who were Caesarians, but regarded as moderates, and also met Cicero. Like Philippus, Cicero called him 'Octavius'. Cicero found him, he told Atticus (14.12), 'most respectful and friendly', but thought 'he cannot be a good citizen. There are too many around him. They threaten death to our friends'. Cicero might seem proud and foolish in risking the young man's anger by refusing to call him 'Caesar', but he was being consistent and logical. Once Octavius had decided for certain to accept the inheritance and claim adoption, he would be duty-bound to avenge his new father's death by attacking

Cicero's friends the conspirators.

Antony returned to Rome during May and Caesar Octavian at once went to see him. Antony, twenty years older than this very young man, at first did not think much of him, and told him it would be a crushing burden to become Caesar's son. According to Dio (45.5), when Caesar Octavian insisted that he would accept the inheritance, Antony pretended to try to secure it for him, but in fact got tribunes to keep vetoing a law to make his adoption official.

Stubbornly, Caesar Octavian put some of Caesar's property up for sale, to find himself sued by a number of people claiming that Caesar had confiscated property from them unfairly. Many of these cases were judged by Antony and his allies, who repeatedly decided against Caesar Octavian; however, he still found a way to start paying Caesar's legacies to the people of Rome. This, of course, brought him huge popularity, which was exactly what Antony had tried to avoid.

More than one source states that Caesar Octavian did it by selling his own property inherited from his biological father, Octavius, his mother and stepfather's property and the property of Pedius and Pinarius, who made over their share of Caesar's estate to him. But perhaps this story of his having to scrape funds together is propaganda. Certainly by the end of this year he had plenty of cash. Appian (3.11) tells us that among those who first flocked to Caesar Octavian in Italy were 'soldiers ... who were either engaged in conveying supplies and money to the army in Macedonia, or bringing other money and tribute from other countries to Brundisium'. The money going to Macedonia was for the Parthian expedition, and there will have been a lot of it, while the money coming into the port of Brundisium was the revenue from the rich Eastern provinces. Clearly, among the soldiers who had been trusted to deliver this money to the Senate there were many who felt that Caesar's son deserved the money, or that it might buy his favour. Caesar Octavian also inherited Caesar's agents and freedmen, and the backing of some other very wealthy men.

On 1 June Antony brought proposals before the people that, for his provinces after his consulship, he should give up Macedonia and be given in exchange Cisalpine Gaul and Gallia Comata, the area conquered by Caesar, organised by now into a province separate from the original Transalpine Gaul. Both he and Dolabella in Syria were to hold their provinces for five years. These proposals were passed in the Assembly on 2 or 3 June. Antony had put himself in an immensely strong position. Cisalpine Gaul was just to the north of Italy and an excellent place to recruit new legions, and Antony planned to keep five of the six legions stationed in Macedonia, with just one being sent to Dolabella for the Parthian expedition. However, the meeting that passed the Bill could be challenged in several ways: it was not a day marked out for assembly meetings; not enough notice had been given; and the veterans had used violence to encourage the People to vote for it.

By another law passed at this time, Antony set up a Board of Seven to give

out public land to veterans and to the poor. He appointed his younger brother Lucius Antonius, who was tribune, to be in charge of it. Although it was common to staff such land commissions with political allies, it was illegal to appoint one's own relatives to them and, again illegally, Antony himself, the proposer of the Bill, was to serve on the commission.

The Senate met on 5 June and, on Antony's proposal, voted to give Brutus and Cassius the task of buying grain in Asia and Sicily; this gave them a respectable reason for being away from Rome, but these were not very impressive jobs for praetors, who would normally expect to go on to govern provinces. Perhaps the Caesarians were getting revenge for the *silvae callesque* (supervision of forests and cattle tracks) which the Senate had tried to foist on Caesar after his consulship of 59. Cassius was furious, and the two men refused the appointments. Brutus was expected to come to Rome to oversee the Ludi Apollinares from 6 to 13 July, a job that had been given to him as urban praetor, but he did not turn up, although he had spent much time and effort on making the festival particularly magnificent. There was at least one demonstration in support of Brutus (Cicero, *ad Att.* 16.5), but generally the festival did not go down well (*ad Att.* 16.1).

Sextus Pompey, son of Pompey the Great, had been a fugitive after Caesar's victory at the Battle of Munda in 45, but after Caesar's return to Italy later that year he had taken back control of Spain, and now had seven legions under his command. When Lepidus arrived in his province of Nearer Spain, he came to an agreement with Sextus (Cicero, *ad Att.* 16.1.4, writing on 8 July). The pardon granted to him by Caesar was confirmed, and all the money the treasury had taken after Pompey's death (50 million sesterces, according to Appian 3.4) was restored to him, but Antony kept hold of the lands that he had seized for himself from Pompey's estates. The agreement was another blow to the Republicans, who had hoped that Sextus would fight the Caesarians.

From 20 to 30 July, there was a festival, the Ludi Victoriae Caesaris, to celebrate Caesar's military triumphs. Caesar Octavian paid for this out of his own pocket, with help from some wealthy friends of his adoptive father. Antony, who was trying to present himself as a statesman above party divisions, would not allow Caesar Octavian to bring out Caesar's golden throne and wreath, which it had been decreed should be displayed at all festivals. Antony lost a great deal of support from the people for this and Caesar Octavian accused him of insulting Julius Caesar's memory. At this festival a bright comet appeared in the sky, which was interpreted as Caesar's soul rising into heaven, and after the games Caesar Octavian had a bronze statue of Caesar set up in the Temple of Venus Genetrix with a star over his head, symbolising his divinity.

According to Appian (3.29), Antony's bodyguard of veterans begged him to make peace with Caesar's son, and these games were followed by a brief period of reconciliation between him and Caesar Octavian, but Antony was

still trying to win support from both sides. At the beginning of August, he made a speech that was conciliatory towards Brutus and Cassius and, since they were reluctant to take up the corn commissions, he got the Senate to give them the provinces of Crete and Cyrenaica, neither of which had legions in it. (It is difficult to date this allocation of provinces; it may have happened earlier.) As governors, they and Decimus Brutus would be immune from prosecution until the end of their time in office. But Brutus and Cassius told Antony that he could not buy them off, and left Italy.

Rattled by the support given to Caesar Octavian, and finding Brutus and Cassius unwilling to work with him, Antony became increasingly frustrated. Cicero, who had set sail from Italy, but had been driven back by a gale and then came back to Rome, made a fairly moderate speech against him on 2 September. On the 19th, Antony made a biting personal attack in response. In October, Cicero composed a savage speech that was never delivered, but which was published, along with a written version of his earlier speech in the Senate. Cicero called them the First and Second Philippics. The original Philippics were the great speeches made by Demosthenes of Athens in the fourth century against King Philip II of Macedon. This shows Cicero's vanity: he was claiming to be the greatest of Roman orators as Demosthenes was regarded as the greatest of Greek orators. It may also indicate pessimism, since Demosthenes had failed: King Philip had defeated the Athenians and put an end to their freedom. Twelve more Philippics were to follow.

Cicero presents Antony as a gambler, an alcoholic who repeatedly threw up into his toga the morning after a party, a man who when young had prostituted himself to powerful older men for money and favours. His abuse has affected how we view Antony, but in this case as in others, such as Catiline and Clodius, we are to some extent at Cicero's mercy, since we do not usually have the speeches that were made on the other side. Such extreme attacks were a regular part of Roman politics. Dio (46.18), in a speech he puts into the mouth of Antony's supporter Calenus, is probably reporting the abuse that Cicero got in his turn at the time: Cicero, Calenus says, had been a pimp for his young second wife and had sex with his own daughter. Neither these accusations against Cicero, nor what Cicero says about Antony, should be treated as any kind of evidence.

In the Second Philippic, Cicero stated publicly something that he had often written in his letters: if he had been invited to join the conspiracy, he would have ensured that Antony was killed as well as Caesar. Cicero was no soldier, but he did not lack courage, either now or at the very beginning of his career when, during Sulla's dictatorship, he defended Sextus Roscius against charges brought by Sulla's freedman Chrysogonus. His courage is obscured by his own letters, in which he reveals his hesitations and worries, but if we did not have his letters we might see him differently; if we had the letters of some of the other leading political players of the time, especially Pompey, we might see in them weaknesses at least as great as Cicero's.

In October, Antony accused Caesar Octavian of plotting against his life, and the friendship between them was broken. Allegedly Caesar Octavian had bribed some of Antony's bodyguard to kill him; but, as Appian (3.39) rightly says, although they were rivals, at this point it was not in Caesar Octavian's interest for Antony to be killed.

Enemy of the state

On 9 October, Antony set out for Brundisium to meet up with four of his Macedonian legions, which had been sent to Italy. Meanwhile Caesar Octavian started visiting the colonies in Campania. He won many of the veterans around: 'no wonder', commented Cicero (*ad Att.* 14.8), 'since he gives them 2,000 sesterces apiece'; this was more than two years of a soldier's regular pay. Plutarch (*Brutus* 23) says 'the soldiers, as though for sale at auction, flocked to the highest bidder'.

He formed an army to oppose Antony, returned to Rome with these soldiers and stationed them in the Campus Martius, where troops were allowed. On 10 November he went into the Forum and made a speech defending his own actions and attacking Antony. He took armed men with him but certainly not his whole force, and if his intention had been to use his troops to capture Rome it came to nothing. Most of his soldiers, unhappy at the attack on Antony, deserted him; they wanted revenge on the conspirators, not a quarrel between Caesarians. Caesar Octavian moved north into Etruria to recruit more soldiers; many of those who had abandoned him in Rome soon realised that they did not fancy trying to make their way in civilian life, and came back to him.

Antony was finding it no easier to deal with his troops. According to Dio (45.13), they had turned against him when he came to Brundisium and gave them just 400 sesterces each, and they were still angry at his delay in avenging Caesar's murder. Caesar Octavian had sent men to spread propaganda around Antony's camp, with obvious success, and Antony had to kill a number of the soldiers, including centurions, in order to bring the rest into line. In the eyes of the Romans, it was particularly offensive that he did this in the sight of his wife.

Antony then marched north against Decimus Brutus, but stopped off at Rome with many of his troops. He called a meeting of the Senate on the night of 28 November; night meetings were illegal, and Antony barred the entry of some tribunes who were opposed to him. Gaius Antonius, Antony's brother, who had taken over Brutus' role as urban praetor, was given the province of Macedonia. News came that two of Antony's legions, the Martians, named after Mars the god of war, and the Fourth, had defected. When Antony went to meet the rebel legions at the town of Alba Fucens, they shot at him. Antony found 2,000 sesterces each for the soldiers in his remaining two legions, which stayed loyal.

Caesar Octavian also managed to capture Antony's war elephants. This was a great public relations *coup*, as Romans had been obsessed with elephants since Hannibal crossed the Alps with them. In practical terms, however, it could be argued that elephants were not much use in war. They might frighten the enemy, but they were very easily frightened themselves and might start

trampling their own side's soldiers. All those who rode elephants were given a stake and a hammer to drive into the elephant's skull if necessary.

Decimus Brutus was refusing to leave Cisalpine Gaul and had recruited and trained new legions. Antony set out for the province with the two loyal Macedonian legions, a third, which had crossed later, and a legion made up of his own veterans. Most of the Senate and the *equites* came out to meet him on 29 November, and joined with his soldiers in swearing the oath of loyalty to him. Antony's policy of trying to work together with the conspirators had frustrated many of the veterans, but he was popular with the wealthier businessmen, and with centurions and officers: peace and reconciliation appealed to those who had something to lose. Antony hoped for the support of Lepidus, governor of Gallia Narbonensis and Nearer Spain, with his four legions, Pollio, governor of Further Spain, with two, and Plancus, the current governor of Gallia Comata, with three. All these legions were made up mainly of soldiers who had fought under Caesar. Caesar Octavian had the two legions that had defected to him from Antony, his two legions of Caesar's veterans, and one of new recruits. He gave his soldiers another 2,000 sesterces and promised them 20,000 after victory.

But who was going to be their enemy? Caesar Octavian took a major gamble at this point. His support depended on his being Caesar's son, and there was an expectation that he would avenge Caesar, but he could not take on both Decimus Brutus and Antony. For the moment he led his soldiers against Antony, even though Antony was fighting the conspirator.

On 20 December, the Senate met. By now, armed guards were posted outside its meetings. The senators had turned completely against Antony, even though nearly all of them had recently sworn to support him. The Senate ordered all governors to stay in their provinces after the end of the year: with this ruling, they encouraged Decimus Brutus to resist Antony and took Macedonia away from C. Antonius.

On 3 January, after three days of debate, the Senate sent Caesar Octavian and the new consul Hirtius to fight against Antony. On the proposal of a man named Servilius, whose daughter was about to be engaged to him, many powers were given to Caesar Octavian. The nineteen-year-old was given the status of a praetor and allowed to be a candidate for all magis-tracies ten years ahead of time; the money he had promised his men was to be paid out of the Treasury; his soldiers, including those who had defected from Antony, would be allowed to retire after this campaign and would be given land at once. The most astonishing decision was to make him a senator. Before this, a man could only become a senator by being elected to a magistracy by the votes of the People, or through the decision of a censor or dictator, not by a vote in the Senate. Pompey had remained an equestrian until his consulship, even though he was given propraetorian *imperium* for specific campaigns. The Senate was taking powers for itself that it had never had before.

Antony told the Senate that he would disband his army if his men received

the same privileges as those who had deserted him to fight for Caesar Octavian, and if the laws he had passed were not overturned. He accepted that Brutus and Cassius should be consuls in 41 and agreed to give up Cisalpine Gaul, if he could keep Gallia Comata, with six legions in it, for five years as arranged, so he would be immune from prosecution until the end of 39. The senators rejected Antony's offers and, on 3 or 4 February, passed the *senatus consultum ultimum*, declared Antony's measures null and void and repealed a law that banned Pompeians from holding political office. They took off their togas and put on military clothing; although they refused to use the word, war had been declared.

Passing through the province of Asia in mid-January, Dolabella killed its governor Trebonius, the man who had kept Antony talking while the others stabbed Caesar (according to Dio 44.19; Plutarch, *Caesar* 66 says it was Decimus Brutus who did this). He was the first of the conspirators to die; when the news reached the Senate some two months later it declared Dolabella a *hostis* (public enemy).

After leaving Italy, Brutus went first to Athens, where he recruited a number of young men of important and wealthy families who were studying in Athens, among them Cicero's son Marcus. In Thessaly in northern Greece he found Pompeian soldiers who had survived Pharsalus, and a large quantity of weapons that Caesar had gathered for his Parthian campaign. Hortensius, the governor of Macedonia in 44, surrendered his province to him. Hortensius was a Caesarian, but his father had been a strong Republican and he was related to Brutus. When C. Antonius arrived in Greece to claim the province, his soldiers defected to Brutus and he became Brutus' prisoner. Brutus wrote to the Senate which, on Pansa's proposal, made Brutus' governorship of Macedonia official.

Cassius was much admired by the army in the East because he had shown cool and effective leadership after the disaster at Carrhae. He arrived in Syria and won over the eight legions there, then gained control of four legions on their way to join Dolabella. When Dolabella arrived from the province of Asia with two legions, Cassius' army surrounded him.

Meanwhile, however, Decimus Brutus was besieged in Mutina by Antony, and his men were beginning to starve; Hirtius and Caesar Octavian were holding back. The consul Pansa was sent from Rome with four legions of new recruits, but Antony attacked these reinforcements at Forum Gallorum on 14 April, before they could join forces with Hirtius and Caesar Octavian. Pansa himself was severely wounded, but Hirtius arrived with two legions and defeated Antony's forces. About half the troops on each side died in this battle. On 21 April, Hirtius finally engaged Antony at Mutina. Antony fled the field after many deaths on both sides, but Hirtius was killed after breaking into Antony's camp; Pansa died of his wounds shortly afterwards. There were, naturally enough, rumours that Caesar Octavian had a hand in both deaths.

The Senate made the most, not only of the victory, but of the fact that the

two Caesarian consuls had died. On 27 April, Antony was for the first time declared a public enemy and he and his supporters had their property confiscated. A Triumph and command over the dead consuls' soldiers went, not to Caesar Octavian, but to Decimus Brutus. The Senate gave control of the fleets and coasts of the Empire to Sextus Pompey, and official command in Syria and the leadership of the war against Dolabella to Cassius, something that Pansa had previously opposed. Brutus and Cassius were given *maius imperium* in the East, the authority to issue orders to any other Roman magistrates. The money promised by the Senate to the armies was reduced.

The soldiers remained devoted to Caesar Octavian, who gathered around him those of Antony's defeated troops that had remained near Mutina. He refused to surrender Pansa's troops to Decimus Brutus, or to stop an ally of Antony, Ventidius, from bringing Antony reinforcements. Caesar Octavian got his men to take an oath not to fight against any of Caesar's old legions: this, of course, meant most of Antony and Lepidus' armies.

Antony led his men in a difficult retreat across the Alps in which they suffered terribly from hunger, but by May was in Gallia Narbonensis near Lepidus. Plutarch (*Antony* 18) presents Lepidus as genuinely trying to restrain his soldiers from coming over to Antony, but two of his officers allegedly dressed up as prostitutes and managed to see Antony in secret, telling him that, if he attacked, Lepidus' army would go over to him. On 29 May the two armies joined together, with the Tenth Legion, once commanded by Antony, leading the way. Lepidus was probably not really upset; on 20 June he was declared a public enemy.

At the end of June Decimus Brutus joined Plancus in Cularo (Grenoble) after a weary trudge across the Alps. He was short of money and, although he and Plancus had fourteen legions between them, ten were of raw recruits. At the end of July, Pollio came up into Gaul from Further Spain with his two legions, and persuaded Plancus to join Antony's side. Decimus Brutus was now surrounded by enemies; he tried to escape, but was seized and killed by a Gaulish chieftain who wanted to win Antony's support. Having added Lepidus and Plancus' troops to his own, Antony crossed back over the Alps with seventeen legions and 10,000 cavalry.

In the early days, Cicero had had justified concerns about Caesar Octavian (*ad Att.* 14.14, 15.3), but after Mutina, in contrast to the attitude of other senators, Cicero started unreservedly praising him, even to the conspirators (*ad fam.* 10.28; *ad Brut.* 1.3), in spite of the young man's clear decision to move away from the Senate and towards the other Caesarians. The difference between Cicero's approach and that of the Senate as a whole raises doubt about the common view, which goes back at least as far as Plutarch (*Cicero* 45) and Appian (4.19), that Cicero had great power and influence at this time.

Cicero's support of Caesar Octavian was partly tactical, as he tried to keep the alliance against Antony together, but he does also seem to have started letting his enthusiasm run away with him. It was said that Caesar Octavian

was proposing to ask for himself and Cicero to be made consuls together in place of Hirtius and Pansa, but this may have been a rumour spread by Cicero's enemies (Cicero, *Philippics* 14.15 ff.). Brutus warned him in a letter of early May 43 that his hatred towards Antony's family and his admiration of Caesar Octavian were both getting out of control (*ad Brut.* 1.4). Cicero continued to declare, even in mid-July, that the Republicans owed their lives to Caesar Octavian, 'our only protection ... who ... thrust Antony away from our necks' (*ad Brut.* 1.15). Brutus wrote to Atticus in a furious mood, telling him that Cicero was not interested in liberty, only in a new tyrant who would be kind to him personally (Plutarch, *Cicero* 45; *ad Brut.* 1.17). Brutus was mistaken only in thinking that Cicero knew what he was doing.

The Senate tried to persuade Caesar Octavian to disband his forces. Instead he sent 400 of his soldiers to demand their money and the consulship for him and his cousin Pedius. Allegedly, one soldier even went into the Senate with a drawn sword, and said: 'If you do not grant Caesar the consulship, this will grant it' (Suetonius, *Augustus* 26; Dio 46.43). It is probably not a true story, but it sums up the truth of the situation. In early August, ignoring the Senate's attempts to do a deal, Caesar Octavian crossed the Rubicon into Italy with eight legions. As the soldiers marched towards Rome, the Senate declared a state of emergency, ordering the praetors to take charge of the city, but when Caesar Octavian arrived on 18 August the three legions in Rome switched sides; two of them were veteran legions that had served under Caesar. The Senate surrendered to him and one of the praetors, Cornutus, committed suicide; that was the only death. The following day, elections were held and Caesar Octavian and Pedius were voted in as replacement or suffect consuls. Caesar Octavian was still nineteen years old.

From Philippics to Philippi

Caesar Octavian seized control of the public funds and made an immediate distribution to his men of half the money he had promised them, 10,000 sesterces each, and was given control of Decimus Brutus' old legions. He had a law passed confirming his adoption by Julius Caesar and ensured that all the money left by Caesar to the people was paid; he overturned the amnesty for Caesar's murder and prosecuted the conspirators. Brutus and Cassius were condemned in their absence; the jurors were forced to make a record of their votes, and only one voted to acquit them. Even Sextus Pompey, who had been hiding in Spain at the time of Caesar's murder, was condemned. The Senate was made to overturn its decrees declaring Lepidus and Antony enemies of the state.

Antony and Lepidus arrived in Italy. Caesar Octavian met them near Bononia, on an island in the River Lavinius. They had each brought five legions with them. Lepidus went across to the island first to check it was safe; each general was searched for hidden daggers. They met there for three days and decided to ask for the title of *tresviri rei publicae constituendae*: Board of Three, or Triumvirs, for the Ordering of the State. Their power was to last for five years. They had consular *imperium* and were in charge of all public affairs and appointments, which they made for several years in advance. Antony had abolished the dictatorship, and it is true that they were not like traditional Roman dictators, who exercised power with the assistance of Masters of the Horse but without colleagues. Unlike the so-called 'First Triumvirate' of Caesar, Pompey and Crassus, the 'Second' Triumvirate was an official body created by law, though irregularly: the law passed in the Assembly that created the Triumvirate on 27 November came into effect straight away; in the case of all other laws, there was a three-day interval for the law to be scrutinised in detail.

Caesar Octavian was given the provinces of Africa Vetus, Africa Nova, Sardinia and Sicily; Antony got Cisalpine Gaul and Gallia Comata; Lepidus took Gallia Narbonensis and Spain. Caesar Octavian had accepted a poor deal: he had to fight Sextus Pompey for control of the islands, and the Republican Quintus Cornificius had to be driven out of Africa Vetus. In return, Antony and Lepidus had been made to abandon any idea of looking for support from both Caesarians and Republicans and commit themselves to a campaign of vengeance against Caesar's murderers. Lepidus was appointed consul for the following year and stayed in Rome, with three of his legions; Antony and Caesar Octavian were to make war against Brutus and Cassius.

Caesar Octavian broke his engagement to Servilius' daughter and married Clodia, Clodius' daughter and Antony's stepdaughter. According to Plutarch (*Antony* 20), he did this in response to the demands of the soldiers. The Triumvirs made up a proscription list, on which were the names of 200 or 300

senators and some 3,000 *equites*; they were to be put to death and left unburied, and their property was to be confiscated. The Triumvirs wrote a justification for their actions: Caesar's mercy and pardoning of his enemies had led to his own killing and to renewed civil war, so they would arrest their enemies now (Appian, 4.8; this is probably not the original wording). So that the men carrying out the murders and confiscations, and those who received rewards for information, would not have any fear of punishment in the future, the Triumvirs ordered that none of their names should be recorded. The city became full of informers, and a wife, parent, child or slave could easily get a man killed. Slaves and family members who remained loyal and sheltered someone on the proscription lists could be punished. However, Sextus Pompey, who had been proscribed himself, made his base in Sicily and provided refuge to others on the proscription list, promising people who helped the proscribed double the money that was on offer for killing them.

Among the first to be killed was a tribune, Salvius, in spite of the fact that a tribune was supposed to have the protection of the gods. Verres, in exile in Massilia, was on the list, and finally lost his life for the wealth that his crimes had brought him. Meanwhile, as Dio says (47.12), 'very many of those who were not proscribed also lost their lives, because they either were hated or had money'; Appian (4.5) comments, 'the triumvirs needed a great deal of money to carry on the war'. The list kept being added to: for example, when, on 31 December, Lepidus celebrated a triumph for victories in Spain, it was announced that anyone caught not sacrificing or feasting would be proscribed. A number of the names added probably reflected local rivalries in the towns of Italy, with Italian supporters of the Triumvirs finding an excuse to get their enemies out of the way (Syme 1939: 193–4). The victims included Lepidus' brother Lucius Aemilius Paullus and Antony's uncle Lucius Caesar. Both in fact survived: Paullus was spared by the soldiers and fled to Brutus, while Lucius Caesar was protected by his sister, Antony's mother. Others also escaped. The fact that many on the lists managed to flee Italy was probably something that the Triumvirs expected and did not mind: their enemies were out of the country, and they had left their property behind.

One name on the list was Cicero. We are told (Plutarch, *Cicero* 47) that Caesar Octavian held out for a long time against proscribing him, but in reality it is very doubtful that Caesar Octavian had any hesitation about proscribing a man who had enthusiastically supported his adoptive father's murderers. Nor is it obvious that Caesar Octavian, ruthless as he was, deserves to be condemned for this death in particular. Cicero was a talented man, but that should not make us more inclined to see him as a particularly good man. His gifts as a speaker could be used for vicious bullying (as in his lip-smacking demolition of Clodia in the *Pro Caelio*), and the Ides of March was not the first time that he had shown his support for political murder: his own ruthlessness is shown in his support for Milo. There is a letter to him from Caesar's friend Gaius Matius (*ad fam.* 11.28), written after Caesar's

murder. In it Matius defends himself for mourning his friend's death, and attacks, with great politeness, the attitudes of Cicero and the conspirators; it is very proud and deeply moving, and it is difficult to read it without coming away with a little less respect for Cicero's eloquence and morals.

When he heard that he was proscribed, Cicero set off to join Brutus in Macedonia but was overtaken by the assassins sent by Antony at Caieta on 7 December. Antony not only had Cicero's head attached to the Rostra in the Forum, like other victims of the proscriptions, but also the hands that had written the Philippics. It is claimed that first his wife Fulvia put Cicero's head between her knees, pulled out his tongue, and stabbed it with a hair pin (Dio 47.8).

After the deaths came the taxes. Roman citizens in Italy did not usually have to pay income or property tax, but now, throughout Italy, those with the equestrian property qualification of 400,000 sesterces who owned rental properties had to pay a tax equivalent to a year's rent; those who owned their own homes had to pay half the rental value for the year; landowners had to pay half their yearly produce. Slave owners were taxed 100 sesterces per slave. Still short of money, the Triumvirs imposed an unprecedented tax on 1,400 of Rome's wealthiest women, reduced to 400 after protests. There was no more money to be had from the western provinces and Brutus and Cassius had control of the East, so for the first time the rich of Rome and Italy had to pay the money the generals needed for their soldiers. It was one of the very few examples in Roman history of redistribution of income, but small business owners and their employees, and small-scale farmers, were losing money in the chaotic conditions and only the soldiers were gaining. As Appian comments (4.35), 'the only safety for the rulers ... lay with their soldiers': Rome had become a military dictatorship.

On 1 January 42, the Triumvirs made all the senators swear to keep all Caesar's laws in force. He was declared a god and a temple was to be built to him in the Forum where his body had been burned. Everyone had to celebrate Caesar's birthday: any senator or senator's son who failed to do so would be fined a million sesterces. Caesar Octavian now added *divi filius*, 'son of a divinity', to his name.

In the late summer of 43, Brutus had crossed into Asia. The Eastern provinces had already been forced to pay money to Pompey, Caesar and then Dolabella, and Brutus had to use threats to get contributions from them (Plutarch, *Brutus* 2). However, once Brutus and Cassius had military control of the East they were able to take the region's regular taxes for themselves. Brutus then started minting money. He put his own head on the coins and, on the reverse, the kind of cap worn by slaves when they got their freedom, and two daggers, showing that by the stabbing of Caesar he and Cassius had delivered the Romans from slavery.

Before the end of 43, Cassius had Dolabella under siege. For a while, supported by Cleopatra's money, Dolabella held control of the sea, but when

he lost a naval battle he killed himself. Because of her help to Dolabella, Cleopatra won from the Triumvirs in Rome the right to call her son Caesarion King of Egypt. Cassius fined the city of Tarsus 1,500 talents (nearly 36 million sesterces) because it had supported Dolabella; to raise the money, the city started selling citizens into slavery (Appian 4.64), until Cassius himself called a halt.

Brutus and Cassius fought their way through Asia Minor, gathering money from public and private sources; Cassius had King Ariobarzanes of Cappadocia killed on the grounds that he was plotting against him, and seized his treasure. They were able to give their soldiers 6,000 sesterces each. Their fleet, under the command of Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus, controlled the Adriatic Sea between Italy and Greece; Antony and Caesar Octavian crossed with difficulty, but found their supplies cut off. Antony, moving with extraordinary speed, met the Republican army on the plain of Philippi. Caesar Octavian, who had fallen ill, arrived ten days later, carried in a litter.

Caesar Octavian's forces faced Brutus, and Antony's faced Cassius. According to Plutarch (*Brutus* 38), these were the two largest Roman armies that had ever fought each other. In 59 there had been perhaps fifteen legions of 4,000–5,000 men in the whole empire; by now there were sixty, with roughly equal numbers of auxiliary troops (Rawson 1994: 486). Brutus and Cassius had fewer infantry but more cavalry, and their forces were increasing as new allies joined them, although their soldiers were less skilled and many were foreigners, and many had fought under Caesar. They had, however, more provisions and more ready money, and they showed this off to the enemy by decorating their soldiers' armour with gold and silver and giving out plenty of food. They were also in a far better position, on high ground secure from flooding with easy access to firewood and water. Appian (4.110–11) states that Antony forced battle on 23 October by sending troops to challenge Brutus' soldiers. The Triumvirs' army was promised the now standard 20,000 sesterces in the event of victory.

Caesar Octavian was still so sick that he could barely stand, and his troops were cut to pieces by Brutus' force; he got himself carried out of danger and hid in a marsh. Brutus' right wing advanced into Caesar Octavian's camp so quickly that it got separated from the troops in the centre, commanded by Cassius. Almost all accounts of the battle say that now Antony's troops broke through Cassius' ranks and captured his camp, but Plutarch (*Brutus* 42) states that Antony had also retreated into the marsh and it was Caesar Octavian's troops who rallied and defeated Cassius' troops. We may suspect later propaganda at work here, as Plutarch makes it clear that he is relying to a large extent on the writings of Marcus Valerius Messalla, then one of Brutus' officers, who later came over to Caesar Octavian's side. Cassius himself was driven to the top of a hill. Unaware of Brutus' success (his ability to work out what was going on was, according to Plutarch in *Brutus* 43, hampered by his short sight), Cassius told his freedman Pindarus to kill him, with the same

dagger that he had used to kill Caesar.

Brutus rallied Cassius' troops, and paid all his men 4,000 sesterces. His side had lost 8,000 soldiers, Antony and Caesar Octavian twice that number. The Triumvirs' low-lying camp was flooded with heavy rain that froze in the November cold; according to Dio 47.47, Brutus deliberately diverted the river through their camp. They also received news that Brutus' fleet had defeated ships bringing them reinforcements. They had to risk a second battle. Brutus was having trouble keeping control of his foreign troops, as it was after the end of the campaigning season so, after some three weeks, he accepted the challenge.

Caesar Octavian himself was still ill. Once again, Brutus on the right drove the enemy back, but the left wing was overpowered. Brutus was defeated, and that night he too took his own life. Plutarch claims (*Brutus* 29) that Antony was heard to say that Brutus had been the only one of the conspirators who had genuinely thought that killing Caesar was a noble deed, while the others were motivated by envy and hate. After the battle (*id.*, *Antony* 22), Antony threw his own very expensive scarlet general's cloak over Brutus' body. However, Dio says (47.49) that Brutus' head was chopped off and sent to Rome – on Caesar Octavian's insistence, according to Suetonius (*Augustus* 13) – but was thrown into the sea during a storm.

Hortensius, who had been ordered by Brutus to kill Gaius Antonius in revenge for the lives of Decimus Brutus and Cicero, had been captured in the battle; Antony executed him over his brother's tomb.

Note

- ¹ In fact, the official name of the province continued to be Gallia Transalpina until 27. However, for clarity, we shall use the name Gallia Narbonensis to distinguish the area of the original province from the regions conquered by Caesar.

12

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, 42–30

The boy who lived

After Philippi, Brutus and Cassius' defeated troops respectfully greeted Antony as Imperator, but abused Caesar Octavian to his face (Suetonius, *Augustus* 13). This was not only because Antony had won the battles by himself; they knew that Antony had been ready to compromise with the conspirators until Caesar Octavian pushed him into fighting to avenge Caesar. The conspirators and their allies fled, some to Sextus Pompey in Sicily and some to Ahenobarbus, who had kept Brutus' fleet together and continued to control the Adriatic Sea.

Caesar Octavian went to Italy to give out land to the veterans; Antony travelled round the Eastern provinces to collect the money they had promised the soldiers at Philippi. It is a common view that this arrangement reflected Caesar Octavian's weakness: Antony forced Caesar Octavian to take the unpopular job of throwing Italian farmers off their land to give it to the soldiers, while he chose to stay in the East planning to win glory fighting against the Parthians. On the other hand, Appian (5.3) says that the task of settling the veterans was Caesar Octavian's own choice because of his illness: he was not up to the travelling and fighting that Antony would have to do. Perhaps Caesar Octavian concluded that, however much civilians might hate him, he would be consolidating his support from the veterans and would emerge stronger in the long run, a point later made by Appian himself (5.13). But it may be that neither man in fact had much choice: it had to be Antony who stayed in the East because to collect the money needed and to attack the Parthians the Triumvirs needed Brutus and Cassius' old troops, and they would not fight for Caesar Octavian.

There is no doubt about the position of Lepidus. Antony took Gallia Narbonensis off him and Caesar Octavian took Spain, because Lepidus was suspected of plotting with Sextus Pompey. The truth may be simply that Lepidus lost out because the victory at Philippi had been so complete. If Antony or Caesar Octavian had been killed or there had been a longer struggle, his help might have been crucial; as it was, he was not needed.

On Caesar Octavian's proposal, allegedly following the wishes of Julius Caesar, Cisalpine Gaul stopped being a province and became part of Italy 'in order that no one else, under the plea of ruling that province, should keep soldiers south of the Alps' (Dio 48.12), although at first the governor, Antony's ally Pollio, who had seven legions under him, would not give it up.

Caesar Octavian had to halt at Brundisium: 'it was thought that he would not live long in consequence of his illness' (Plutarch, *Antony* 23); according to Appian (5.12), 'a rumour gained currency that he was dead'. He recovered enough to be carried back to Rome.

Eighteen towns in Italy had been marked down to become colonies for the Triumvirs' soldiers. Naturally enough, the towns wanted the soldiers to pay

for their land but, even after Caesar Octavian sold off what was left of the property that had been confiscated in the proscriptions, there was not nearly enough money to do that. Italians evicted from their land without compensation crowded into Rome to weep and protest. Italy was being made to pay for Rome's civil wars and the needs of the veterans.

Sextus Pompey had kept control of Sicily. Huge numbers of slaves escaped to him, and he was blockading Italy and causing famine in Rome. At the same time, land was being taken away from experienced farmers and given to men who, in many cases, had never had any job other than being a soldier. Crime increased in Rome, with violence committed by soldiers who had no fear of punishment, and theft committed by citizens who had no other way of staying alive. Soldiers and civilians were fighting each other throughout Italy. Caesar Octavian did what he could for those in greatest need: the people of Rome had a year's holiday from rent up to a maximum of 2,000 sesterces, while for those who lived in the rest of Italy their rent was reduced to a quarter for one year. However, these measures once again hit property owners.

Antony's brother Lucius Antonius, consul in 41, began to quarrel with Caesar Octavian. According to Appian (5.14), Lucius saw that Caesar Octavian was winning the support of the veterans because he was finding them land, and he wanted to postpone founding the settlements until Antony could return, so that Antony would get a share of the credit. As he surely knew, however, Caesar Octavian could not agree to any delay: the soldiers would not allow it.

Now, Lucius started setting himself up as the champion of the farmers who had lost their land, but at the same time was trying to win the support of Antony's veterans by claiming that their interests were being ignored in favour of Caesar Octavian's soldiers. He also presented himself to the Senate as a Republican who was standing up to the armies of the Triumvirs, in spite of the fact that his irregular career – he was consul just three years after being tribune – does not suggest that he had sincere Republican views.

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, Caesar Octavian should have felt very flattered by Lucius. Like him, Lucius justified his policies as necessary to preserve family honour, which for Romans was a highly respectable reason for one's actions; he even took the name *Pietas* – 'loyalty'. Also, like Caesar Octavian before Mutina, he was carefully building an alliance between veterans, Caesarians and Republicans.

Caesar Octavian's first reaction was unusual. He sent his wife Clodia back to her mother, Antony's wife Fulvia, and swore an oath in public that she was still a virgin. Why had he chosen not to sleep with his wife? Perhaps it was because he always intended to break with Antony and did not want the close link of his children being Antony's grandchildren; or she may not have been sexually mature: marriages, as opposed to engagements, did not usually take place until the bride was thirteen, but in ancient times puberty often came late. But then why did he choose to make this public announcement, running the

risk of people making jokes about him and coming to unwelcome conclusions? It may have been because of Clodia's father Clodius: a statement to those who thought of him as a disreputable revolutionary that he was a respectable man who wanted no connection with rabble rousers. Most likely, it was because he could pick on Fulvia, who was supporting Lucius, 'choosing to appear to be at odds with her rather than with Antony' (Dio 48.5).

In support of Lucius, Pollio in Cisalpine Gaul and Ventidius and Calenus in Transalpine Gaul, all supporters of Antony, blocked the way of Caesar Octavian's ally Salvidienus, who was marching troops towards Spain. In front of Antony's soldiers, Lucius accused Caesar Octavian of being disloyal to Antony and threatening his family. Caesar Octavian alleged that, without his brother's knowledge, Lucius was stirring up conflict in order to break up the Triumvirate, which would lead to the soldiers not getting their land. Officers and veterans tried to bring Caesar Octavian and Lucius together to negotiate on several occasions, but without success, and they prepared to fight. Caesar Octavian ordered Salvidienus to turn back from Gaul to Italy.

Lucius had the overwhelming support of the Senate, although Caesar Octavian had been careful to keep veterans' land, and of the Italian towns, which drove out, and in some cases killed, a number of Caesar Octavian's agents as they tried to borrow money from temples in order to fund the war.

Lucius marched on Rome and then brought his army north into the strongly fortified town of Perugia, where he waited for Pollio and Ventidius' armies to arrive from Gaul. Caesar Octavian summoned all his forces to besiege the town. According to Appian (5.32), Pollio and Ventidius held back, as did another of Antony's generals, Plancus, who was marching north from Campania: 'they altogether disapproved of the war and did not know what Antony thought about it, and on account of mutual rivalry were unwilling to yield to each other the military chieftainship'. What, in fact, was Antony's attitude? It is likely that he knew about Lucius's actions in the early part of the year, but Lucius and Fulvia may have pushed things further than Antony wanted. None of the generals fell out of favour with Antony for their failure to act decisively in this campaign.

Imitating Caesar's tactics at Alesia in Gaul, Caesar Octavian dug deep, wide ditches around Perugia and placed stakes in them. Lucius's men began to starve and, shortly into the new year, Lucius had to surrender. Caesar Octavian treated him with great respect and sent him to be his governor in Spain, where he soon died; he pardoned the citizens of Perugia except the members of the town council, who were executed; the town burned down, allegedly accidentally. Nursia, in Sabine territory, had been attacked by Caesar Octavian during these military operations. The Nursians suffered no punishment after surrendering but, when they wrote on the tombstones of those who had fallen that they had died fighting for liberty, Caesar Octavian imposed such a huge fine that they abandoned the town.

The Antonian soldiers scattered, some joining Sextus Pompey. Two of Plancus' legions were persuaded by Agrippa to defect to Caesar Octavian. Fulvia and Plancus sailed to Athens, where they met Antony early in 40. Calenus, the only one of Antony's generals who had not fled after the Perusine War, died in Gaul; Caesar Octavian sent Salvidienus to take over his army and provinces.

After the defeat of Lucius Antonius, the dispossessed farmers gave Sextus Pompey their support. Antony and Sextus started to work together and Caesar Octavian found himself in a weak position: he was now in charge of forty legions, but had no ships, while the Antonians and Pompeians had 500 between them as, after Perusia, Pollio had persuaded Ahenobarbus to join Antony. He tried to stir up the veterans, telling them that Antony was conspiring with Sextus to give their land back to the dispossessed farmers, but the veterans did not want to fight against Antony, the hero of Philippi (Appian 5.53), so Caesar Octavian was forced to try to work with Sextus. He told his close ally Maecenas to negotiate marriage to Scribonia, the aunt of Sextus' wife, who had been married twice before and already had children.

It was at this point, according to Dio (48.20), that Caesar Octavian gave the African provinces to Lepidus, declaring that he had investigated Lepidus' conduct and found him more or less innocent. This was a perfect move for Caesar Octavian: it helped him to win Lepidus' support; Lepidus took with him six of Antony's legions, which Caesar Octavian did not trust; and Lepidus drove out the existing commander there, Sextus, who was a supporter of Antony.

Bestriding the narrow world

After Philippi, Antony pardoned the supporters of Brutus and Cassius, except for those who had actually been conspirators. He marched across Greece and Asia, collecting money. The Eastern provinces had just given ten years' worth of taxes in two years to Brutus and Cassius; Antony imposed a further nine years' worth over the next two years. He made contact with the Eastern client kingdoms and in some cases settled disputes and assigned kingdoms. In Cappadocia, the young Sisina, who is thought to have owed his throne to his beautiful mother Glaphyra's affair with Antony, became King Archelaus IV. The towns of Asia competed to entertain Antony, and he was compared to Dionysus, the Greek god of wine. Both his enemies and friends acknowledged that he enjoyed a drink, but also Dionysus was believed to have won great victories in the East.

Antony summoned Cleopatra to meet him in Cilicia. Antony knew Cleopatra; he had probably met her when he was in Egypt in 55, and certainly when she lived in Rome in the years before Caesar's death. She came to him in a ship with a gold-painted stern, sails of royal purple and silver oars. Her show of luxury may possibly have been meant to seduce Antony; it was certainly sending him the message that Egypt was the only country in the East that still had the money that Antony needed. Antony knew this and was willing to do business with her. Cleopatra wanted her rebellious half-sister Arsinoe, who had fought against Caesar, killed, and Antony had her executed, allegedly on the steps of the temple of Artemis at Ephesus, causing a great scandal. Antony went with Cleopatra to Alexandria for the winter of 41–40.

In February 40, Antony travelled from Alexandria to Tyre, where he received bad news. Quintus Labienus, the son of Pompey's general Titus Labienus, had been sent to King Orodes II of Parthia by Brutus and Cassius to ask for help. When Quintus heard of the Republican defeat at Philippi, he offered his services to Orodes. He was put in charge of a Parthian army and invaded Syria in 40 together with Orodes' son Pacorus.

However, the situation in Italy took priority. Antony went to Athens and then to Italy and tried to land at Brundisium, but the port shut its gates to him. Antony blockaded Brundisium and asked Sextus to make attacks on Italy. Once again, the soldiers of Antony and Caesar Octavian worked to bring about reconciliation. News arrived from Greece that Fulvia had fallen ill and died. It was now possible, and in both men's interests, to exaggerate her role in the previous year's conflict. Antony took his fleets off the seas, sending Ahenobarbus away to be governor of Bithynia, and calling Sextus back to Sicily.

The Pact of Brundisium was agreed in October 40. The two men divided the Empire between them, with Caesar Octavian taking the western provinces, including Illyricum, and Antony the Eastern, while Lepidus stayed in Africa.

They agreed that their supporters should take turns in the consulship and that either man could recruit in Italy, but they should ensure that they recruited in equal numbers. To seal the deal, Caesar Octavian gave his widowed sister Octavia in marriage to Antony. Octavia's husband Marcellus had died so recently that the Senate had to pass a special decree exempting her from the usual ten-month waiting period before remarriage; she was also pregnant with the younger Marcella, born after her father's death. Antony revealed that Caesar Octavian's old friend Salvidienus, designated as consul for the following year, had written to him offering to defect. Caesar Octavian summoned Salvidienus before the Senate, established his guilt and put him to death.

Caesar Octavian now tried to prepare to fight a campaign against Sextus. To fund it, an inheritance tax and a tax of fifty sesterces per slave were introduced. The edicts announcing these measures were ripped down and rioting broke out, in which Caesar Octavian was pelted with missiles; Antony came into Rome with legionnaires and rescued him. Clearly war against Sextus would be impossible. Scribonia gave birth to a daughter, Julia, showing that Caesar Octavian had no general objection to having sex with a woman he was married to, but he divorced her on the day that Julia was born. He claimed that she had become an unbearable nag, but it is more likely that it was her nephew Sextus that he could no longer bear.

The Triumvirs met to negotiate with Sextus in ships anchored off the promontory of Misenum near Puteoli in the Gulf of Naples, in the spring of 39. Lucius Staius Murcus, one of Sextus' admirals, who opposed an agreement, was killed by his own officers on Sextus' orders; Sextus then pretended that Murcus' slaves had killed him, and crucified them. The four men agreed the Pact of Puteoli, probably in August. Antony and Caesar Octavian promised to buy back from its current owners up to a quarter of the property confiscated during the proscriptions, and return it to the proscribed. Sextus was given 70 million sesterces from his father's estate and allowed to keep control of Sardinia, Corsica and Sicily and take the Peloponnese in Greece for five years, in return for clearing the seas of pirates, removing his blockades of Italian ports, agreeing not to take in runaway slaves and sending a specific quantity of grain to Rome. The nobles among Sextus' followers, except for Caesar's murderers, could return, and those not proscribed could get all their property back and be given magistracies and priesthoods straight away, including Sextus himself; free men would get the same rewards as those who had served with Antony and Caesar Octavian; slaves would get their freedom.

The attention paid to the nobles in this agreement gives the lie to Caesar Octavian's later claims that Sextus' following consisted mainly of slaves and freedmen and that he was in effect a pirate (*Res Gestae* 25.1). Some of his admirals were freedmen, but that may be because few Roman nobles were effective commanders at sea. At this time, out of the three rivals for power, it

was Caesar Octavian who had by far the least support from the nobility.

As Caesar Octavian and Antony travelled back through Italy, people sacrificed to them 'as if to saviour gods' (Appian 5.74).

Antony left Italy and spent the winter of 39 in Athens with Octavia, able to give his attention again to the East. During 40, Labienus and Pacorus had killed Decidius Saxa, the governor of Syria, and occupied most of Cilicia. Immediately after the signing of the Pact of Puteoli, Antony sent Ventidius to fight the Parthians. He defeated them at the Cilician Gates, after which Labienus was captured and killed. He then won a second battle at Mount Amanus, and finally defeated and killed Pacorus in the Battle of Cyrrhestica on 9 June 38, destroying most of his army. In all these battles, the Romans took advantage of the fact that the Parthians had foolishly abandoned the use of mounted archers that had led to victory at Carrhae, relying instead on heavy-armed cavalry. Antony himself then captured Samosata in Commagene. Ventidius went back to Rome to celebrate the first Roman triumph over the Parthians.

The Senate had grown to 1,000 under Caesar and continued at this size under the Triumvirate in spite of the high death toll of these years. At this point, according to Dio (48.35), the Triumvirs were nominating a particularly large number of new senators, using the need for commanders and administrators in the war against the Parthians as an excuse, though it may be doubted whether, as Dio alleges, slaves were sometimes enrolled by mistake. Appointments were made many years in advance. Magistrates often served for less than a year, sometimes much less; at its extreme, this led to there being sixty-seven praetors in 38 (Dio 48.43).

On 17 January 38, Caesar Octavian married Livia, the daughter of Livius Drusus, who had been proscribed and had committed suicide after Philippi. Her first husband, Tiberius Claudius Nero, had supported in turn Lucius Antonius, Antony and Sextus Pompey. Livia was six months pregnant at her wedding; Caesar Octavian asked the priests if it was acceptable to marry a woman who was pregnant by an earlier marriage; not surprisingly, they told him that it was. Tiberius Claudius Nero gave her away, and died not long afterwards, naming Caesar Octavian as the guardian of his sons, Tiberius and Nero Drusus. Caesar Octavian's great hurry seems puzzling. We don't know the couple's private feelings, but there were certainly political advantages to this marriage connection with the great families of the Livii and Claudii: everyone could see that the nobles were ready to do business with Caesar Octavian.

One of Sextus' admirals, the freedman Menas, who controlled Corsica and Sardinia, offered to surrender the islands to Caesar Octavian. This was very tempting, but of course it would mean renewed conflict. Caesar Octavian claimed that crews from ships that he had captured had confessed that Sextus had ordered more raids on the coasts of Italy, so breaking the Pact of Puteoli. He accepted Menas' offer, sent men to take over Sardinia and Corsica,

fortified coastal towns throughout Italy, ordered ships to be built, and sent for a large army in Illyricum to come to Italy. He asked Antony to meet him at Brundisium, but when Antony crossed to Italy Caesar Octavian was not there to meet him on the appointed day and he refused to wait. Caesar Octavian and Menas then sailed to attack Sextus. Caesar Octavian was defeated off Sicily, and most of what remained of his fleet was destroyed in a violent storm; he fled. In Rome, tax collectors were attacked and there were riots against Caesar Octavian and the war.

Antony crossed again from Athens in the spring of 37. He and Caesar Octavian were angry with each other, for reasons that we might guess. From Antony's point of view, Caesar Octavian, instead of trying to make agreements work, was constantly calling him back to negotiate and distracting him from the Parthians. From Caesar Octavian's point of view, Antony, by failing to take a tough line against Sextus, had left Rome and Italy ruined, something for which he, rather than Sextus, was often blamed 'on account of those who were still under the spell of the memory of Pompey the Great, for the fame of that man had not yet lost its influence over them' (Appian 5.99). Antony was happy for Caesar Octavian to be hated, and for himself to win glory in the East while doing nothing to solve the crisis at the heart of the Empire.

Octavia, a saintly figure in the propaganda produced by Caesar Octavian's side, is said to have reconciled her husband and her brother and, perhaps as late as September, a treaty was signed at Tarentum. Caesar Octavian would send Antony four legions for his Parthian expedition, and Antony would leave 120 ships with Caesar Octavian. They agreed, without reference to the Senate or People, that their triumviral powers, which had lapsed at the end of 38, should be renewed for a further five years. Sextus had his priesthood and future consulship taken away. Antony set off to campaign in Asia, leaving Octavia and his children with her brother.

Finally, the two men could pay full attention to their key priorities. Caesar Octavian got Agrippa to rebuild and equip his navy. Agrippa, consul this year, had won a great victory over the Gauls at Aquileia in 38 but went without a Triumph out of sensitivity to Caesar Octavian's military failure, and settled down to his appointed task, building harbours in the Lucrine Lake in Campania and using the labour of 20,000 freed slaves. Antony's general Canidius led an expedition into Armenia, defeating the Armenians and winning victories over their northern neighbours the Iberi and Albani; this prepared the way for Antony to move against Parthia from the north.

‘A slight, unmeritable man’: three become two

On 1 July 36, Lepidus, with fourteen legions, set sail from Africa, Titus Statilius Taurus, suffect consul in 37, from Tarentum, and Caesar Octavian and Agrippa from Campania, so surrounding Sicily from the south, East and west respectively. On the third day, a gale arose; Caesar Octavian lost many ships, and was attacked and defeated by Menas, who had defected back to Sextus in the winter. Sextus, following the example of Sulla, made publicity out of the favour he had been shown by the gods. He called himself the son of the sea-god Neptune, gave thanks to Neptune for twice sending a storm to harm his enemies during summer, and changed the usual purple general's cloak for a dark blue one, the colour of the sea.

Sextus continued to enjoy successes, especially against Caesar Octavian in person, but Agrippa took charge of Caesar Octavian's fleet and seized Sextus' base at Mylae while Statilius Taurus harassed his supply bases and cut off his provisions. Sextus decided to risk everything on a sea-battle, and on 3 September 300 ships of each side faced each other at Naulochus. Agrippa had worked out a modification to the grappling-hook that the Romans used to stick into the masts of enemy ships so that they could be boarded: a mechanism by which the hook, attached to a rope, could be fired at enemy ships, so that it was not necessary to come in close to them. This decided the battle: only three ships were sunk on Caesar Octavian's side, while only seventeen of Sextus' ships escaped. Sextus had never been strong on land and, once his fleet had been defeated, his infantry surrendered and he fled to Greece.

Lepidus quickly arranged a truce with eight of Sextus' legions. Now in charge of roughly as many legions as Caesar Octavian, he tried to take control of Sicily and use it as a bargaining chip to have himself reinstated as a full member of the Triumvirate. The soldiers were in no mood to fight yet another civil war; Lepidus' troops gradually came over to Caesar Octavian: 'they admired the energy of Octavian, and they were aware of the indolence of Lepidus' says Appian (5.124). This is unlikely to be just later propaganda: it is hard to find evidence of initiative in Lepidus' career. Lepidus was forced to throw himself on Caesar Octavian's mercy, and Caesar Octavian sent him back to Italy stripped of his general's cloak; from now on he had a guard with him at all times.

But now the army mutinied, demanding immediate discharge and the same honours and rewards as the veterans from Philippi had received. Caesar Octavian started giving out honours; a military tribune called Ofillius shouted out that honours were children's toys, and the soldiers wanted land and money. The next morning he had mysteriously disappeared. Caesar Octavian granted discharge to the 2,000 soldiers who had served at Mutina and Philippi, and sent them away immediately, settling many in the provinces. He warned the rest of the soldiers that he would never in the future employ any soldier

that had been discharged and gave them 2,000 sesterces each, imposing a levy of 1,600 talents on Sicily to help pay for this. The soldiers settled down.

The turnaround in Caesar Octavian's fortunes was extraordinary. The Senate came out from Rome to meet him, escorting him into the city. He accepted an ovation, not a Triumph since he had not defeated a foreign enemy, and a golden statue of him was set up in the Forum on the top of a column decorated with the rams of ships. A number of Italian towns gave Caesar Octavian a place among the gods (Appian 5.132).

Tribunes, the protectors of the people, were given 'sacrosanctity': to do them physical harm was an offence against the gods. This was to protect them from attacks by the nobles. Although Caesar Octavian was a patrician and so could not be a tribune, he was given tribunician sacrosanctity for life in 36 BC (Dio 49.15) – an acknowledgement that he was the people's greatest protector, and a link to Julius Caesar, who had received the same honour in 44. In 35, tribunician sacrosanctity was given to his wife Livia and sister Octavia.

All the slaves that Sextus Pompey had enlisted as soldiers and sailors were arrested and sent to Rome, from where around 30,000 (*Res Gestae* 25.1) were returned to their owners, and 6,000, whose owners could not be found, sent to be crucified in the towns from which they had escaped.

Caesar Octavian was able to cancel the remaining instalments of his emergency taxes and to call off the collection of all unpaid taxes. He appointed Calvisius to round up the robbers who were operating all over Rome and Italy. Calvisius worked efficiently for a year, putting many to death. Caesar Octavian handed a great deal of administration back to the magistrates and claimed that he would surrender all his special powers once Antony had returned from the Parthian campaign. However, the unelected equestrian Maecenas took responsibility for the running of the city 'now and for a long time afterwards' (Dio 49.16).

Antony had given ships to Caesar Octavian immediately after the Treaty of Tarentum, but six months later there was no sign of the legions Caesar Octavian had promised Antony in return. Antony now broke with Caesar Octavian; he never returned to Octavia. He summoned Cleopatra to Antioch in late 37. Octavia had been pregnant three times in three years, which does not suggest that Antony had been pining away for love of the Egyptian queen, but he now showed her great favour. He confirmed her rule over Cyprus and presented her with Crete, Cyrenaica, Phoenicia, Coele (central) Syria and a large part of Cilicia, along with coastal areas of Judaea and Arabia Nabataea.

From one point of view, this was just a part of Antony's general policy. Plutarch records (*Antony* 36) that 'he used to say that the greatness of the Roman Empire was made manifest, not by what the Romans received, but by what they bestowed'. The Empire, greatly enlarged by Pompey's conquests in the East and Caesar's in the west, was becoming too big for a narrow oligarchy to rule; in limiting its size, as in many other policies, Antony showed himself to be closer to the Republicans than Caesar Octavian, whose

later expansion of the Empire would lead to a greatly increased number of Romans becoming involved in the running of the provinces, many of them *equites*. Antony kept only three Roman provinces in the East, Asia, Bithynia and Syria. When Ventidius recaptured Cilicia from Labienus in 39, this not very profitable region was not returned to the Empire but given to Polemo, the son of Zeno of Laodicea, a prominent pro-Roman aristocrat and friend of Antony.

Some rulers of the East, however, such as Antiochus of Commagene, had proved disloyal: they had mostly been Pompey's clients, and when the young Labienus, who came from a family that was very close to Pompey, arrived at the head of a Parthian army, they supported him. Antony consolidated power in the hands of a few trusted rulers. Archelaus IV remained in charge of Cappadocia. Amyntas, who had recently come to the throne of Galatia, had defected to Antony from Brutus and Cassius just before the battle of Philippi; he obtained rule over Pisidia, Lycaonia and much of Cilicia. In exchange for Cilicia, Polemo was made king of Pontus and Lesser Armenia. Herod was installed as king of Judaea in 37, replacing Antigonus II, a client of the Parthians. In this context, the lands given to Cleopatra were no more extensive than those given to others, although they were very rich. Cleopatra wanted Herod's kingdom and, if she had taken it, would have ruled as great a territory as any of her dynasty had ever controlled, but Antony would not give it to her.

What was unusual was the fact that these territories were given to a woman who already ruled the large and wealthy kingdom of Egypt. And there was far more than territory involved: Antony acknowledged as his the twins that Cleopatra had given birth to in 40, calling one Cleopatra the Moon and the other Alexander the Sun. Cleopatra was the descendant of one of Alexander the Great's Macedonian generals (there is no evidence that she had any Egyptian blood), and Antony presented himself as a new Alexander who would make great conquests in the East; Cleopatra associated herself with the Egyptian goddess Isis, mother of the Sun – the sun appears often on Antony's coins from now on. To Antony's enemies, the position that Cleopatra achieved, allegedly becoming an equal partner with Antony, could only be explained by his overwhelming passion for her, but it may have been the price that Cleopatra exacted for the money she gave. The East was financially exhausted, and Antony had struggled even to raise the money he had promised to his soldiers at Philippi. For a great campaign against the Parthians, only Egypt had sufficient resources. And some of the territories given to Cleopatra were rich in timber, which would help her to build up a navy that could support Antony.

In Parthia, Orodes died and his son Phraates seized the throne and set about murdering his brothers; he may have murdered his father too. Antony asked him for the return of the standards captured from Crassus' army and the release of any Roman soldiers still alive in Parthia; Phraates refused.

Antony was not going to repeat the mistake of Crassus and march across

the flat plains of Mesopotamia, where there was little water and the soldiers could easily be attacked by cavalry and archers: he took his army north. King Artavasdes of Armenia supplied him with 6,000 cavalry and 7,000 infantry. The Roman army numbered 60,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry; other countries supplied around 30,000 men.

Very early in 36, Antony marched from Armenia towards Parthia through the hostile country of Media Atropatene (northern Iran and Azerbaijan). In the course of a disastrous campaign, Artavasdes abandoned the Roman army, allowing their siege engines to be captured; Antony failed to take Phraaspa, the capital of Media Atropatene; and in the retreat the Parthians managed to force the Romans into the mountains and prevent them from foraging, so that they starved: Plutarch (*Antony* 44) records that loaves of barley were being sold for their weight in silver. They started to eat poisonous plants; Plutarch (*ibid.*) mentions a herb that sent men mad and then made them vomit bile and die. The soldiers attacked Antony's own baggage-train and stole from it. By the time they returned to Armenia, the Romans had lost 20,000 infantry and 4,000 cavalry, more than half through disease. Antony spent the winter on the Syrian coast, where Cleopatra joined him, bringing clothes and money for his soldiers.

The last Pharaoh?

After fleeing to the East, Sextus Pompey tried to come to terms with Antony, but Antony discovered that he had also sent envoys to the Parthians offering to fight for them. He was killed by Antony's general Titius and Caesar Octavian held games in the Circus Maximus to celebrate.

Octavia wanted to join Antony; Caesar Octavian allowed her to go, in the hope, according to Plutarch (*Antony* 53), that Antony would treat her so badly that it would give him an excuse to go to war against him. Antony would not leave Alexandria to meet her in Athens; she asked where she should send him the money, clothes, pack animals, presents and 2,000 men for his praetorian guard that she had brought, although Caesar Octavian still had no intention of supplying the 20,000 legionaries that he had promised. Antony took the presents, supplies and troops and ordered her back to Rome; Caesar Octavian was, or pretended to be, furious, but Octavia refused to divorce Antony.

Late in 35, the king of Media Atropatene quarrelled with King Phraates over the division of the spoils taken from the Romans and offered alliance to Antony. The Medians inflicted several defeats on the Parthians. In spring 34, Antony invaded Armenia. He invited King Artavasdes to a meeting and had him put in chains, and then conquered Armenia and made it a Roman province. That winter, Antony held a triumph in Alexandria, followed by a ceremony known as the Donations of Alexandria. Cleopatra was named Queen of Kings, ruler of Egypt, Cyprus, and Coele Syria, Caesarion being King of Kings and joint sovereign. She was acknowledged as the widow of Julius Caesar and Caesarion as Caesar's son. Alexander the Sun was given Armenia, and was to be given Media and Parthia when they were conquered. Their younger son Ptolemy Philadelphus was given Phoenicia, Syria and Cilicia. Their daughter Cleopatra the Moon was given Cyrenaica. Antony was not mentioned in this exclusively Egyptian ceremony, since he needed to keep his freedom to represent himself to different audiences in different ways. To the Greeks he was Dionysus; to the Egyptians he was Osiris, consort of Isis; to his soldiers and Roman colleagues he was a descendant of Hercules, a Triumvir and proconsular army commander.

Assigning countries to a pair of six-year-old twins and a two-year-old boy made no immediate practical difference to the business of administering the East, but it may have worried other client monarchs and Antony's fellow Romans that so much territory was being claimed for Egyptian rule. However, after his expensive defeat in Parthia, Antony was more dependent than ever on Cleopatra.

Antony made one last appeal in 33 to Caesar Octavian to allow him to recruit troops from Italy and to find him land for his veterans to settle when they came back from the East. Caesar Octavian refused, and spoke against the Donations of Alexandria in the Senate. Antony in turn sent messages

attacking him. He asked why he had not been given any share of Sicily after the defeat of Sextus Pompey, why all the ships that he had given to Caesar Octavian for the campaign against Sextus had not been returned and why Caesar Octavian had taken all Lepidus' soldiers, land and money for himself. Caesar Octavian replied that he would share Sicily when Antony shared Armenia and that his soldiers could settle themselves in Media and Parthia which their great general had added to the Roman Empire. Caesar Octavian had set out on expeditions against the Illyrians, who were raiding Italy, in 35 and 34, achieving success even when taking command himself and returning with honourable wounds. He must have loved being able to mock Antony for his military failings; Philippi seemed a long time ago.

Antony started preparations for civil war. He travelled from Armenia to the Eastern coast of the Aegean, stripping the province of its troops; the Parthians overran it the following year. He gathered a naval force of 800 warships, 200 belonging to Cleopatra, who also provided twenty talents of money and supplies for the whole army, and insisted on joining the expedition herself.

It was a great advantage to Caesar Octavian and his supporters that they were in Italy itself and could exercise patronage more easily to all classes of society. In 33, Caesar Octavian was allowed to create new patricians, as Julius Caesar had done. In 34, Agrippa repaired the Marcia aqueduct, and in 33, although he had already been consul, he took the unusual step of accepting the junior office of aedile, with responsibility for the upkeep of the city. Using his own money, he repaired public buildings and streets and cleaned the sewers, demonstrating how well the job had been done by sailing through them. He gave fifty-nine days of games, distributed free olive oil and salt, and paid for free visits to barbers and free bathing for a year. He set up in the Circus Maximus the carved dolphins that were flipped upside down to indicate when a lap had been completed. He repaired the Appia and Anio Vetus aqueducts and built the Aqua Julia, named, naturally, after Caesar Octavian.

The phantom battle

At the end of 33, the Triumvirate officially came to an end. However, no individual or organisation was strong enough to demand that Antony and Caesar Octavian put aside their powers. It was in any case arguable that their triumviral powers were like those of promagistrates which, unlike magistrates' powers, did not lapse until a successor turned up to claim them.

Dio (50.2) dates the start of open war between Antony and Caesar Octavian to the beginning of 32. He gives various causes (50.1), noting that Caesar Octavian 'reproached ... Antony ... particularly because he was calling the boy Caesarion and was bringing him into the family of Caesar'. Antony was doing more than being provocative; he was challenging the whole basis of Caesar Octavian's power, which was that he was Caesar's heir. But Antony's early taunt that Caesar Octavian was no more than a name was hardly true any longer. And, having stayed in Italy, Caesar Octavian was able to present himself as the true Roman, while Antony had 'gone soft' in the East. He might be said to be the first politician who ever sold himself to the public as the defender of Western values.

However, Caesar Octavian clearly did not believe that the Donations of Alexandria by themselves would turn people against Antony. He had done nothing to bring about open conflict during 33. Antony was not the first Roman to give lands to loyal client rulers and their families. He was, of course, not even the first to have sex or even children with a client queen. Antony had certainly taken things further by presenting himself to the Alexandrians as Cleopatra's husband and awarding territory to their children, and by holding a Triumph outside Rome without the approval of the Senate, although he would surely have held an official Triumph if he had defeated Caesar Octavian and returned to Rome; but these things were not enough to make Antony's supporters desert him. Although Roman senators will certainly have known about the Donations, since they were a public event and upper class Romans travelled a good deal and wrote many letters, this had not had much effect on the level of support for Antony in the Senate. Antony was still the leader who showed greater willingness to work with senators of all shades of opinion and, in spite of everything that had happened since the start of 36, he was still a better general than Caesar Octavian. The majority of the senators, and especially of the nobles, were still on Antony's side. The people may well not have known about the Donations, or anything about some of the countries 'given' to Cleopatra and her children.

There was already, however, a propaganda battle. Suetonius preserves a remarkable letter from Antony to Caesar Octavian, which can be dated to 32 by Antony's reference to the nine years since he and Cleopatra started sleeping together.

What difference does it make to you if I'm poking the queen? She's my wife. You're acting as if I started it yesterday, instead of nine years ago. Are you only poking Livia Drusilla, then? My congratulations if, by the time this letter gets to you, you haven't gone and poked Tertullia or [Maecenas' wife] Terentilla, or Rufilla, or Salvia Titisenia – or the whole lot of them. Does it really matter in what place and what woman you stick yourself?

(Suetonius, *Augustus* 69, author's translation)

If this was a private letter, it seems astonishingly clumsy. While Roman men did not expect themselves or each other to be faithful to their wives, they didn't necessarily enjoy their affairs being shouted about, and the wife Antony was cheating on was Caesar Octavian's own sister. However, it is more likely to have been an 'open' letter, addressed to Caesar Octavian but meant to be read out to the public. If so, it is actually quite clever. It makes mischief against Caesar Octavian: at least one of the women that he is accused of sleeping with is the wife of one of his close political allies. It plays on Antony's reputation as man who enjoyed his food, wine and sex, and allows him to portray Caesar Octavian as an uptight hypocrite. For a Roman audience, Antony plays down the seriousness of his relationship with Cleopatra, although the reference to her being his 'wife' may still have worried the Romans he was trying to win over.

The consuls for 32 were Antony's generals Ahenobarbus and Sosius. Antony had sent them an account of his arrangements in the East and asked them to get the Senate to make them official, offering in exchange to lay down his powers as Triumvir. They were uncertain that they could get the approval of the Senate, but in February Sosius tried to bring in a proposal to condemn Caesar Octavian; a tribune vetoed it. Then Caesar Octavian came to Rome, summoned the Senate, and made accusations against Sosius and Antony, promising to bring 'certain documents' to another meeting to prove his case. He obviously frightened Antony's supporters, either by his words or because he had surrounded the Senate House with armed men, and over three hundred of the thousand senators fled Eastwards to join Antony, whose first response was to divorce Octavia.

A clue to Caesar Octavian's sudden decision to strike against Antony now may lie in the defection to him of Titius and Plancus. They may have been worried about Cleopatra's influence over Antony, or they may simply have thought that Caesar Octavian was now the man to bet on. Both men had witnessed Antony's will, which prompted Caesar Octavian to make a tremendous gamble. He seized the will from the Vestal Virgins and read it out to the Senate and then to the Assembly. To read out a living man's will against his wishes was not just bad manners, and illegal; it was an offence against the gods. Caesar Octavian had to hope that people would be so shocked by what was in the will that they would forget how outrageous it was to make it public.

Plutarch indicates (*Antony* 58) that the Senate did not think much of Caesar Octavian's behaviour, but Dio (50.3–4) says that 'the clauses contained in [the will] were of such a nature that this most lawless procedure on Caesar's part brought upon him no reproach from the citizens; ... they became so angry at this that all ... censured [Antony] severely'. They may both be right: Caesar Octavian may have had a cool reception in the Senate but got the reaction that he wanted from the people. Particularly shocking were Antony's decisions to make his children with Cleopatra his official heirs and to be buried in Alexandria, and so, it could be said, not to die as a Roman. Julius Caesar in his will had left money to his Roman wife and relatives, and to the people of Rome; the will had not even mentioned Cleopatra or Caesarion.

Antony was stripped of next year's consulship and Caesar Octavian and his friends kept up a relentless stream of propaganda. If Antony won against Caesar Octavian, he would make Alexandria the capital of the Empire; Cleopatra was swearing that she would sit in judgement over Roman citizens on the Capitol. The two rumours were inconsistent, since if Alexandria became the capital of the Empire Cleopatra would have no reason to take over Rome, but that didn't matter. War was declared against Cleopatra – not Antony. Both Caesar Octavian and Antony got those in the areas under their control to make personal oaths of allegiance to them (*Res Gestae* 3.3, 25.2; Dio 50.6), so that, in effect, the whole of the west was now Caesar Octavian's clientela and the whole of the East Antony's.

Caesar Octavian had scored a brilliant public relations success, but Antony still had many advantages. He had more troops and, thanks to Cleopatra, more money. Caesar Octavian had to resort again to emergency taxes, making citizens pay a quarter of their income, with rich freedmen paying an eighth of the value of their property. The dangers of Caesar Octavian's position, and the fact that he had nothing like the complete support that he later tried to claim, were shown by a campaign of arson in Rome in early 31, in which temples and a large part of the Circus Maximus were burned.

Most of Antony's forces were near the town of Actium on the south side of the narrow, sheltered Ambracian Gulf in western central Greece. He himself was in Patras, one of a chain of ports in Greece he was using to keep his men supplied with grain from Egypt. Caesar Octavian set out, leaving Maecenas to take care of Rome and Italy. He took a large military force, the senators who were still in Rome, and his most prominent equestrian supporters, 'with the purpose of showing to all the world that he had the largest and strongest element among the Romans in sympathy with himself' (Dio 50.11).

Agrippa had already captured the port of Methone in the Peloponnese in southern Greece, which was an essential link in Antony's supply chain. Caesar Octavian, meeting no resistance from Antony's troops, seized and fortified the north side of the entrance to the Ambracian Gulf. Antony's decision to make his base at Patras had not enabled him to keep his supply chain safe, but it had meant that he was not there in the Gulf to help fight off

Caesar Octavian. Now Antony had to rush north to defend Actium. In choosing to station most of his troops at Actium, he had probably been influenced by the fact that the flat, low-lying plain south of the Gulf was an excellent place to fight a land battle, but it was easily flooded and became covered in stagnant water. Antony's troops started to fall ill, probably of malaria and dysentery. With their supply chain broken, they also began to run out of grain, and some deserted, including Ahenobarbus. Agrippa, having captured Leucas, Patras and Corinth from Antony, arrived to take command of Caesar Octavian's fleet.

Antony decided to break out from the Gulf on 2 September. With the wind in his favour, he managed to create a gap through which Cleopatra's ships, containing the pay chest, sailed; he then followed himself. About a third of the fleet in total got away. At this point the wind changed, and a gale blew against the rest of Antony's ships, trapping them in the Gulf and forcing the troops on them to surrender. The rest of Antony's soldiers, who had not been put on board the ships, surrendered without a fight within a week. Antony and Cleopatra fled to Egypt.

The campaign as a whole clearly marks the end of the civil war: Antony and Cleopatra were not able to put up any effective resistance afterwards. However, it can be argued that this had little to do with the 'battle' of Actium itself. It was Agrippa's capture of the ports along Antony's supply chain that most weakened Antony. Actium did not really leave Antony much worse off; in fact, the action in itself was a reasonable success: he broke out of the trap Caesar Octavian had set, saving his pay chest and a fair number of ships and troops. He might have survived to fight another day, if the large army left in Greece had not gone over to Caesar Octavian. In many ways, the campaign against Antony of 31 repeated the campaign in Sicily of 36. The same two things were decisive for its success: Agrippa's ability to win crushing victories at sea and Caesar Octavian's ability, because of the magic of the Caesar name and his reputation for taking good care of soldiers, to win over his enemies' land forces without a fight.

This, however, was not convenient for propaganda purposes. Caesar Octavian could not publicly state that the war had been won at Methone or Patras or Corinth, where he was not present, or by the bloodless surrender of Antony's army. Even more importantly, since Caesar Octavian had won support for the campaign by presenting it as directed against the foreign woman Cleopatra, she had to be shown as being there at the decisive moment. The only part of the campaign in which Caesar Octavian, Antony and Cleopatra had all been directly involved was Actium; that, therefore, had to be presented as the turning point. Actium was represented as a full-scale battle, in which Antony's aim had not been to escape, but to defeat Caesar Octavian's forces. Cleopatra, who in fact had skilfully done exactly what Antony had wanted, escaping with all her ships and the money for the soldiers' wages, could be made into a coward who ran away. Antony could be

represented as following her without thinking, like a puppy ('a deserter from his own army', Velleius 2.85), rather than because that was his plan.

Actium – the reality and the myth – was commemorated in many ways. Caesar Octavian revived the Actian Games, a four-yearly music and gymnastic contest. He also established a victory monument where his camp had been and a town near the site of the 'battle', called Nicopolis, 'City of Victory'. Apollo had a temple near Actium and Caesar Octavian claimed that the god had helped him to win the battle; after the victory, he built Apollo a new shrine on the battle site (Dio 51.1).

Caesar Octavian associated himself closely with Apollo, a god of the sun, creative arts, and medicine, associated with reason and often seen as encouraging moderation and self-restraint, a contrast to Antony's association with Dionysus, god of wine and excess. He was a purely Greek god with no Roman counterpart, and up to now no temples to him had been allowed inside the *pomerium*; and yet he had saved the Romans' ancestor Aeneas. He was, therefore, a respectable god, but not prominent in Rome, so he was not weighed down with too many existing associations (Galinsky 1996: 216). As far back as 36, Caesar Octavian had vowed to build a temple to Apollo on the Palatine Hill, right next to his house; this was completed in 28.

From the moment war was declared against Cleopatra, the propaganda directed against the queen was extremely aggressive. Romans, like all people, had their prejudices against foreigners, but they took some pride in their tolerance, especially in matters of religion. It is hard to find parallels in the late Republic to the vicious racism that was now directed against Cleopatra, the Egyptians and their weird animal-headed gods (Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.698–700). Egypt was traditionally a country of magic, and Cleopatra was supposed to have bewitched Antony. Eastern monarchs' use of eunuchs as advisers was a gift to propagandists: Horace in *Epode* 9, published shortly after the battle of Actium, wrote: 'In service to a woman Roman soldiery/ Bears stake and weapons, and can bring itself to yield obedience/To wrinkled eunuchs' (12–14). In the later *Odes* 1.37 Horace accuses all Egyptians of being deformed and diseased (6–10). Cleopatra herself is portrayed as a drunk, another common accusation against the Egyptians (14–16).

In his third book of poems, written some ten years or more after Actium, Propertius throws together drunkenness, promiscuity, sexual enslavement of a man, insect infestations and weird foreign music and gods, in a great parade of prejudice.

Why should I tell of her who lately brought disgrace on Roman arms,
Sampled the sexual favours of her household slaves, and then
Issued the price and invoice of her shameful marriage:¹
The walls of Rome and Senate cowed to her royal command? ...
[To think that she] should dare to match against our Jupiter her

barking Anubis,

Should dare to force our Tiber to endure the threats of Egypt's Nile,

And with her rattling castanets should dare to drown out Roman trumpets,

Or with her puny rowing boats to chase Rome's great Illyrian galleys,²

Or dare to stretch her foul mosquito nets across the Capitol ...

She cried out, her speech confused by endless draughts of undiluted wine.³

(Propertius 3.11.29–33, 41–5, 56)

Cleopatra has become, in Horace's words, a *fatale monstrum*, 'doom-laden monster' (*Odes* 1.37.21). Caesar Octavian here appears not just as the defender of West against East but almost as the defender of the human race against a wild beast.

Asp and aftermath

Marcus Lepidus, son of the deposed Triumvir, launched a plot to assassinate Caesar Octavian when he returned to Rome, but Maecenas uncovered it. Marcus Lepidus' mother was Brutus' sister, and he had married a woman called Servilia, a relative of Brutus' mother, showing that Lepidus the father had always hedged his bets, maintaining links with the Republicans. As the plot came just after Caesar Octavian's defeat of Antony, and given the lack of support that had been given to Lepidus the father by soldiers and citizens, it seems unlikely that Lepidus the son had many followers. He was sent to Caesar Octavian and executed.

Caesar Octavian sent those troops who were over the normal age for fighting back to Italy. They started making trouble; Agrippa was sent to keep them quiet, and then, in January 30, Caesar Octavian himself found it necessary to return from Egypt to Italy and find some money and land for them quickly by evicting those communities that had supported Antony. This is more evidence that Caesar Octavian's later claims, for example in *Res Gestae* 25.2, that 'the whole of Italy' had sworn allegiance to him in 32 are false. In spite of the poor state of his finances, however, Caesar Octavian cancelled the payment of the fourth instalment of taxes imposed on the freedmen. He did not want to be distracted by further trouble in Rome, and he was counting on getting his hands on the treasures of Egypt.

Not long after his return to Egypt, on 1 August, Caesar Octavian's troops took control of Alexandria. The truth of what happened next has probably been buried in romantic fiction and propaganda. What is certain is that both Antony and Cleopatra killed themselves. Cleopatra may, as the story says, have died from the bite of an asp: the asp, or Egyptian cobra, was the servant of the Egyptian Sun-god and protected Egyptian rulers, so its bite made for a symbolic and royal death. As asps can grow to over eight feet long, however, the tradition that Cleopatra had the asp smuggled in hidden in a basket of figs (Plutarch, *Antony* 86) is unlikely; an asp would have difficulty hiding in a basket of watermelons.

The attitude towards Cleopatra's death shown in the poems written by the poets of Maecenas' circle is interesting. Nothing in her life, they said, became her like the leaving it. In her suicide, she was as proud and courageous as a Roman man.

Seeking

A nobler death, she did not in woman's fashion

Tremble at the sword, nor with her swift fleet

Reach secret coasts for safety.

She dared to gaze with face serene on her
Fallen palace, and bravely grasped
Savage serpents, to drain their dark
Venom through her body's veins.

(Horace, *Odes* 1.37.21–8)

Similarly, Horace is allowed to praise 'Cato's illustrious death' (*Odes* 1.12.35–6) and to include him in a list of Roman heroes, while on the shield of Aeneas Virgil has Cato after his death laying down laws for the righteous in the blessed fields of Elysium (*Aeneid* 8.670). The message is clear: if you are an enemy of the Caesars and you want to be honoured by posterity, kill yourself.

Caesarion had to be killed; it was not good to have too many Caesars (Plutarch, *Antony* 81). Caesar Octavian had always argued that Caesarion was not Julius Caesar's son, but his murder perhaps tells a different story. Antyllus, Antony's oldest son by Fulvia, was also killed, but Antony's younger children were all brought up in Octavia's house, even the children of Cleopatra. There was no killing of Egyptians, but Caesar Octavian was careful not to show them respect. He would not go to see Apis, the Egyptians' sacred bull, commenting that he 'was accustomed to worship gods, not cattle' (Dio 51.16).

Caesar Octavian imposed a tribute on Egypt, but did not make it a province in the normal way. It was to be governed by a prefect appointed by Caesar Octavian himself, who was an equestrian, not a senator. Egypt's vast resources of money and grain made Caesar Octavian frightened of giving it to any senator to govern; he did not allow senators even to go there unless he personally gave permission. But there was more: to make his rule more acceptable to the Egyptian political and priestly classes, within Egypt he exercised power in the traditional way, as a Pharaoh, an absolute ruler and a god. As far as the Egyptians were concerned, he 'went native' more thoroughly than Antony had ever done, but, unlike Antony, he was sensible enough to hide it from the Romans, and to stay physically away from Egypt.

Shakespeare's Cleopatra, after Antony's death, exclaims that 'there is nothing left remarkable/Beneath the visiting moon' (*Antony and Cleopatra* 4.15.67–8). But that is wrong: Caesar Octavian was a very remarkable man indeed.

Notes

- 1 Propertius means her marriage to Antony, although, of course, to Romans it was a marriage only in Cleopatra's eyes, not in Roman law.
- 2 This is the reverse of the reality of Actium. Antony and Cleopatra's large and clumsy conventional ships were, at first, outmanoeuvred by Caesar Octavian's light Liburnian ships. Liburnians were often used by pirates but Agrippa made them into effective warships. It was Caesar Octavian's side that was not too proud to use small but practical boats, while Antony stuck to glorious 'great galleys'.
- 3 Drinking undiluted wine was a sign of excess for Romans. Their wine was stronger than modern wine; for example, Falernian, a white wine, was 15–16 per cent alcohol: Grout 2009: 'Wine' in *Notae*, www.penelope.uchicago.edu/~grout/encyclopaedia_romana/wine/wine.html.

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FROM SON OF CAESAR TO
AUGUSTUS, 30–18

The homecoming king?

The Republic was over. Brutus and Cassius had attempted to restore it in 44 by murdering Caesar, but instead the state had collapsed into anarchy; this had been brought to an end by Caesar Octavian's defeat of all his rivals. Although the Romans of this time did not themselves use the term, the period that followed is today known as the Principate, which indicates the rule of the leading man or Princeps. There had been leading men (*principes*) in the Republic; in fact, Caesar Octavian liked to call himself Princeps because the word sounded Republican, unlike 'king' or 'dictator', a respectable word in earlier times but not after Sulla and Caesar. But now there was one leading man. Later in his life, in the *Res Gestae* (34.1), Caesar Octavian claimed that he had transferred the state (*rem publicam ... transtuli*) back to the control of the Senate and the People. He did not wish to be seen as someone who had introduced a new kind of government. He did not, however, claim that he had 'restored the Republic'. The Latin words that he used, *res publica*, do not mean 'Republic' in the modern sense of a state without a monarch, but simply 'the state' or, even more generally, 'public affairs'.

Caesar Octavian's position in 30 can be seen as much stronger than that of Julius Caesar in 45. This is partly because the wealth of Egypt led Rome to enjoy much greater and more immediate benefits at the end of this civil war: 'by bringing the royal treasures to Rome in his Alexandrian triumph he made ready money so abundant, that the rate of interest fell, and the value of real estate rose greatly' (Suetonius, *Augustus* 41). Above all, however, his position was strong because the Romans themselves and all the peoples of the empire had had another fifteen years in which to become absolutely sick of war. Terror of civil war breaking out again was, among most people, now stronger than any discontent with Caesar Octavian or the desire for freedom from the domination of one man. Velleius (2.89) gives the official line, but must reflect what many were thinking: 'Fields were cultivated once again ... ; men felt safe at last, with their property rights secured'.

Obviously, Caesar Octavian's control of the state largely came from the huge numbers of soldiers under his command and the fact that all serious rivals for power had been killed or, like Lepidus, neutered. A moral justification for Caesar Octavian's powers in these years could have been the oath of personal allegiance to him that had been taken by 'the whole of Italy' (*Res Gestae* 25.2) in 32. But also, although he stopped using the title of Triumvir in 32 and states that he was Triumvir for only ten years (*Res Gestae* 7.1), he continued to use triumviral powers, whether legally or not, from 32 to the end of 28, in spite of the fact that one of the original Triumvirs had been sacked and the other died in 30. The evidence for this is that a Triumvir's powers were greater than those of normal magistrates, and we know that at this time his powers were superior to those of his colleagues. Until 28, as

consul he kept the *fascēs*, the bundle of rods with an axe that symbolised a consul's power, all the time; the custom was for the two consuls to share them, one having them in odd months and one in even months (Dio 53.1); as Brunt and Moore point out (1967: 76), this sign that Caesar Octavian was superior to his colleagues in the consulship makes it clear that his powers in the years 30 to 27 were based on more than simply the fact that he was consul every year. In the *Res Gestae* (34.3), he states 'after that time [27] ... I had no more power than others who were my colleagues in each magistracy'. This sentence comes in a prominent position, very near the end of the *Res Gestae*, and the fact that he makes a great deal of this point shows both that he had enjoyed significantly more power than his colleagues before 27, and that this had caused serious resentment.

On Caesar Octavian's return from Egypt in 30, the Senate and People voted him many honours.

They also decreed that Caesar should hold the tribunician power for life, that he should aid those who called upon him for help both within the *pomerium* and outside for a distance of one mile, a privilege possessed by none of the tribunes, also that he should judge cases of appeal.

(Dio 51.19)

This is a confusing passage. Firstly, Dio later tells us (53.32) that Caesar Octavian was given tribunician power for life in 23. Why would he have been given the same powers twice, if those powers were for life? The rest of the first sentence may help to resolve the problem. It deals with the *ius auxilii*, a tribune's right to help those citizens who claimed that they were being mistreated by other magistrates. Perhaps Caesar Octavian was only given this part of the tribunes' powers in 30 and the rest of their powers in 23.

Secondly, Dio is wrong to state that tribunes could not exercise this power up to the distance of one mile beyond the city limits. His source for this statement may have written that Caesar Octavian, unlike ordinary tribunes, could exercise his power more than a mile beyond the city limits, in other words throughout Italy and the Empire, although the right to help still involved only Roman citizens. The end of the sentence introduces the idea of Caesar Octavian acting as an appeal court judge, and perhaps this is linked to the *ius auxilii*: in the same way that Roman citizens could appeal to him against their treatment by other Roman politicians, they could appeal to him against the legal decisions of praetors in Rome and governors in the provinces. This power was good for Caesar Octavian's image: he was the protector of ordinary Roman citizens against politicians who abused their power.

In 29, Caesar Octavian celebrated a triumph for his victories in Illyricum, at

Actium and in Egypt. Because of Cleopatra, he could present himself as conqueror of Egypt and not just the winner of another civil war. He went ahead of the senators who headed the triumphal procession, contrary to custom: there was no pretence any longer that the whole Senate mattered more than the individual general. He gave 400 sesterces each to the Roman plebs 'from war booty' (*Res Gestae* 15.1) – out of his own money, that is, since as the victorious general all booty came to him; this was more than the 300 sesterces they had received from Caesar's will in 44. At least 250,000 received this money (*ibid.*).

In January 29, the doors in the shrine of the god Janus Quirinus, probably a covered passageway with a gate at each end (Aicher 2004: 84, 89, 202), were closed. This symbolised peace throughout the Empire. In *Res Gestae* 13, Caesar Octavian tells us that the doors were reported to have been closed only twice before in the whole history of Rome, but were closed twice more during his reign. The second time was in 25, at the end of campaigns in Spain, Arabia, Egypt and the Alps; it is impossible to be sure of the date of the last closure, if indeed it ever took place: it may at one point have been decreed by the Senate but not carried out because war broke out unexpectedly. It is likely that in 29 Caesar Octavian meant to indicate more by the closing of the doors of Janus than just the end of fighting: he was signalling his intention to take the state off a war footing. After Actium he had found himself in command of nearly seventy legions and many auxiliaries, amounting to 500,000 soldiers in total (*Res Gestae* 3.3): those that he himself had recruited between 44 and 31, Lepidus' soldiers who surrendered to him in 36 and Antony's soldiers, who surrendered to him in 31 and 30. Of these, more than 300,000 were eventually discharged, and the army was reduced to twenty-eight legions.

In 29, Caesar Octavian gave the veterans who were settled in colonies 1,000 sesterces each; by now there were 120,000, the vast majority probably settled only during the previous year. He was very keen to emphasise that he paid for all this with his own money, the first person ever to do so (*Res Gestae* 16.1). In the Republic, the state had paid for the land; in the days of the Triumvirate, he had simply seized land from farmers in Italy. He even gave back money that had been sent to him, allegedly 'voluntarily', by the towns of Italy, another sign that the days of civil war and demands for money from generals were over (*Res Gestae* 21.3; see Cooley 2009: 201 on the history of the giving of 'crown gold' by Italian towns to generals).

A regular guy: the 'First Settlement'

'By order of the people and the senate' (*Res Gestae* 8.1), in 29 Caesar Octavian created more new patricians, to ensure that the priesthoods reserved for patricians could be filled and to re-establish an elite political class. If there were too few patricians, there were too many senators: 1,000, as opposed to some 500 before the dictatorships of Julius Caesar; by expelling those who had supported Antony and were no use to him, Caesar Octavian reduced the numbers to around 800. He also made himself *princeps senatus*, 'Leader of the Senate', an official title, unlike *princeps*, which was simply an unofficial acknowledgement that he was Rome's most important man. Being *princeps senatus* meant that, for the rest of his life, he was the senator who was asked first for his opinion in debates, a role for a grand old man of politics, although he was not yet thirty-five. In this same year, Caesar Octavian opened the rebuilt Senate House, naming it the Curia Julia after Julius Caesar (who began the rebuilding) and himself; he mentions this first out of all his building works in *Res Gestae* 19.1.

Next came what has come to be known as the 'First Settlement'. Although this term is sometimes applied only to the agreement of 13 January 27, Caesar Octavian himself in the *Res Gestae* (34.1) dates the measures by which he claimed to have restored the state to the Senate and People to both his sixth and seventh consulships (28 and 27); Tacitus (*Annals* 3.28) also dates the 'new constitution' to his sixth consulship (28). The 'settlement' was a long and complex process. It is surely significant that Caesar Octavian and Agrippa were consuls together for both years.

In 28, the two consuls conducted a census of Roman citizens, for the first time since 70; now the citizen population was known, and voting rights and tax obligations could be enforced. Since they were not censors, they were given a special grant of censorial power to do this; this information comes from a comment in the *fasti* (list of consuls) set up in the town of Venusia. For the first time in twenty years both consuls stayed in Rome all year, neither going off on campaign, another sign of returning normality and the demilitarisation of Roman politics.

As already noted, in accordance with tradition Caesar Octavian handed the *fasces* over to Agrippa every second month. He also took the consuls' traditional oath at the end of his year in office that he had done nothing contrary to the laws or wellbeing of the state. The fact that Dio (53.1) mentions that he did these things in 28 indicates that he had not done them in earlier consulships. These actions were a strong signal that he intended to exercise power within the law. Another change was his use of twelve lictors from 28 onwards, instead of the twenty-four that he had used previously: each consul usually had twelve lictors; twenty-four was the traditional number for a dictator. Also during this year, a measure was passed to repeal all the

unconstitutional laws passed by the Triumvirate, or at least those that it was convenient for Caesar Octavian to annul. The reverse of a gold coin struck in 28 (LACTOR 17: H18) shows Caesar Octavian seated on the distinctive curule chair used by higher magistrates, wearing a toga rather than armour, holding out a document in his right hand – symbolising either the handing over of political power, or simply his going about the normal business of politics. The writing reads ‘leges et iura PR restituit’, ‘He has restored to the Roman People their laws and rights’.

However, in the minds of many Romans the wounds that needed healing from the civil wars were not only social, economic and political. The evils of the civil wars were both caused by and a cause of a terrible rift between Romans and the gods: ‘Neglected, the gods have visited many/Woes upon grief-stricken Italy’ (Horace, *Odes* 3.6.7–8). It might be disputed whether Romans of the late Republic really had paid little attention to the gods (North 2000: 59), but Horace will not have been the only Roman to believe that this was the reason for their troubles.

In 28, Caesar Octavian tells us, he restored eighty-two temples of the gods within Rome (*Res Gestae* 20.4), from his own money, as the context makes clear, although he is also careful to tell us that he acted ‘on the authority of the senate’ and not on a personal whim. There was a common belief that the Romans owed their good fortune to the gods and, if they wanted to be fortunate again, they had to win back the gods’ favour (Horace, *Odes* 1.35). There is no reason to suppose that Caesar Octavian did not personally believe this as strongly as other Romans, although there was also a clear element of propaganda in his restoring of the temples.

Caesar Octavian faced some problems with powerful individuals around this time. Cornelius Gallus, the first prefect of Egypt, who had achieved great military success, put up statues to himself throughout Egypt and had a list of his achievements inscribed on the pyramids (Dio 53, 23, who says he ‘was encouraged to insolence by the honour shown him’; an inscription that he set up, LACTOR 17: P5, commemorates his successes and mentions his taking the King of Ethiopia under his – not Caesar Octavian’s – protection). He was prosecuted for treason in 27 and committed suicide. Marcus Licinius Crassus, governor of Macedonia and grandson of the Crassus of the ‘First Triumvirate’, demanded the exceptional honour of offering *spolia opima* to the gods, after war in Thrace in 29–28, and was refused, though he was allowed a triumph. *Spolia opima* were spoils given to a commander of a Roman army who had killed in single combat the ruler of a people at war with Rome: Crassus had killed King Deldo of the Bastarnae. They had supposedly been awarded only three times, once to the city’s founder, Romulus; in addition, although he had not in fact killed an enemy ruler in single combat, Caesar had been allowed to offer the *spolia opima* as an honour (Dio 44.4). Crassus was a man of doubtful loyalty who had supported Sextus Pompey and Mark Antony. His family wealth and fame also made him dangerous,

especially as the military glory that he was winning could be set against the disgrace of his grandfather's defeat by the Parthians. He might be considered the biggest threat to Caesar Octavian's grip on supreme power in these years (Kearsley 2009: 148).

The case of Crassus raised the related question of the power relationship between Caesar Octavian and other army commanders. Caesar Octavian did not wish to remain commander of the entire army, as he had been immediately after Actium. This was a position outside the law, and Caesar Octavian wanted to be seen as a constitutional leader rather than a revolutionary. Yet he did not want to be overshadowed by another army commander: his own position relied so much upon his being Imperator, the supreme successful general in the state.

Observation of the flight of birds to discover the will of the gods, 'taking the auspices', was carried out before battle, originally, when the commanders were serving magistrates, by the commander himself; later, the commanders could not campaign 'under their own auspices' because they were usually promagistrates rather than magistrates and so could not take the auspices themselves (Beard 1994: 744). But Caesar Octavian, as a consul, could take the auspices for a campaign. This gave Caesar Octavian a way out: he asserted that Crassus could not be awarded the *spolia opima* as they could be given only to a commander who fought under his own auspices, not a promagistrate. This is behind a passage in which Livy (4.20.5–8) states that Caesar Octavian had told him personally that he had seen a piece of linen in the temple of Jupiter Feretrius that showed that the second man to win *spolia opima* (in 437), Cossus, had been consul; all the sources that Livy had read stated that Cossus had been a lower-ranking military tribune (and therefore not in overall charge of the campaign, and not the man who had taken the auspices). The survival of a piece of linen from the fifth century BC to the first in a ruined temple would have been a miracle, and Livy hardly bothers to hide his scepticism. (Kearsley 2009: 153 further argues that promagistrates had regularly taken the auspices in the late Republic and that the idea that they did not have the authority to do this was an invention of Caesar Octavian.)

These incidents help to show the necessity for a change in the organisation of the army and the Empire. However, as noted above, rather than a panic reaction to crisis, what was done next can be seen as the logical conclusion to the many measures taken during the years 30–28 to restore normality in various ways and give shape to a new form and style of government. On 13 January 27, Caesar Octavian went to the Senate and dramatically gave up all his powers and provinces to the Senate and People. Naturally enough, this was greeted with cries of protest, some of them, no doubt, planned in advance, others a genuine expression of fear that civil war would break out again if Caesar Octavian were not in charge. He was 'persuaded' to accept, for ten years, the governorship of a huge province consisting of Syria, Gaul and Spain, part or all of which he could administer through deputies. (Egypt was

not part of this: it remained almost his personal possession.) There were twenty legions within this 'province'; the governors of the other territories, the 'public provinces', had only some six between them. 'The stronger provinces ... he took to himself', comments Suetonius in *Augustus* 47, with similar comments in Dio 53.16 and Strabo, *Geography* 17.3.25 (although for the moment, Africa, Illyricum and Macedonia, which all had armies in them, were outside the Emperor's province, and so officially under the direct control of the Senate). But now, legally and constitutionally speaking, Caesar Octavian was the proconsul of a province, with powers voted to him by the Senate and People of Rome.

Most of the governors in the Empire, from this point on, were deputies of the Emperor, with the status only of *propraetors*, since the proconsul of the areas that they governed (the 'imperial provinces') was the Emperor: they were *legati Augusti pro praetore*. Caesar Octavian received triumphs and supplications (days of public thanksgiving) for victories won by 'his' governors and commanders.

Although they were technically more independent, even the proconsuls of the public provinces could be represented, as Crassus had been, as fighting under the auspices of Caesar Octavian (inscription from Africa, AD 6–7, LACTOR 17: M4). As consul every year, and therefore one who had greater *imperium* than that of the governors of provinces, he had the right to interfere in the affairs of any province and overrule the governor.

The Senate and People voted him many honours following the First Settlement. One was the civic crown, which was awarded to a soldier who had saved the life of a citizen in battle. Caesar had famously won this honour (Suetonius 2). Caesar Octavian was given the award not because of a moment of heroism in battle but on the grounds that he had saved the lives of all the citizens by bringing an end to civil war. It was a brilliant stroke of propaganda, by which a way was found to give Caesar Octavian who, unlike his adoptive father, was never an outstanding soldier or general, this significant military honour. It was always very important to him (*Res Gestae* 34.2; Valerius Maximus 2.8.7; gold coin of 27, LACTOR 17: H21). Significantly, a citizen whose life had been saved by the winner of a civic crown had to treat that man as his father and obey him (Cooley 2009: 264).

The most important honour was a new name, one that separated him from memories of young Caesar Octavian the ruthless Triumvir. The name was proposed by Plancus, who had been one of Antony's most important generals and had only come over to Caesar Octavian's side in 32.

For when some expressed the opinion that he ought to be called Romulus as a second founder of the city, Plancus carried the proposal that he should rather be named Augustus, on the ground that this was not merely a new title but a more honourable one, inasmuch as sacred

places too, and those in which anything is consecrated by augural rites are called 'august'...as Ennius also shows when he writes: 'After by augury august illustrious Rome had been founded'.

(Suetonius, *Augustus* 7)

Although Augustus wanted to be known as the second founder of Rome, Romulus, the name of the city's first founder, was unfortunate: he had been a murderer, and a king. The name 'Augustus' had the advantage of being linked not only with the word 'augur', but the words *augeo* (increase: in the size of the Empire, its population, and crops) and *auctoritas* (Ovid, *Fasti* 1.609–12). This was the influence that a politician had because of his personal qualities, which might well be greater than his official powers. In the same part of the *Res Gestae* (34.3) in which Augustus emphasises that he had no more power (*potestas*) than any other magistrate of the Roman state, he claims 'I excelled all in authority [*auctoritas*]'. From now on, the story that Augustus told about himself was that he did not possess the powers of a monarch, but was able to guide the state (and so save it from civil war and lawlessness) because of his huge 'influence', the result of his character and his uniquely great services to Rome.

Wars without glory

Augustus continued to be consul every year from 27, but was absent from Rome, campaigning in Gaul and Spain. In Gaul in 27, in keeping with his administrative work in Rome over the previous two years, he took a census; this started the process of organising and taxing Gaul properly: in the years since Julius Caesar left in January 49, civil war had prevented Rome from consolidating and exploiting Caesar's conquests. He fought unsuccessfully in north-west Spain in 26 and fell ill. The command was taken over by Gaius Antistius Vetus, governor of Nearer Spain, who, Dio tells us (53.25), passing on a fabulously unconvincing bit of Augustan propaganda, 'accomplished a good deal, not because he was a better general than Augustus, but because the barbarians felt contempt for him and so joined battle with the Romans and were defeated'.

There was further campaigning in other parts of the Empire. In 26, Aelius Gallus, Prefect of Egypt, launched an expedition against the Sabaeen kingdom of Arabia Felix (Sheba, modern Yemen), in an attempt to get some share of the great profits of the region's trade in spices, gems and precious metals. The Romans reached the capital Mariba but fell ill in the unfamiliar heat and desert conditions and were forced to turn back in 25. Aelius Gallus seems to have continued to enjoy the favour of Augustus and later adopted the son of the great Seius Strabo, praetorian prefect and governor of Egypt; Maecenas' client, the poet Horace, wrote light-heartedly about the expedition in *Odes* 1.29. All this might indicate that the expedition was not after all regarded as an embarrassing disaster, but it may just be that the region was so far away that Augustus and his court were able to rely on public ignorance to conceal the extent of the failure.

In 25, the new Prefect of Egypt, Petronius, fought a successful campaign in Aethiopia (northern Sudan rather than modern Ethiopia) to gain control of the area to the south of Egypt. In the same year, Aulus Terentius Varro Murena campaigned in the Alps against a tribe called the Salassi and founded a colony, Augusta Praetoria, modern Aosta. The Salassi were described as 'bandits', and the pacification of the Alps is presented as part of restoring the Empire to order (*Res Gestae* 26.3; Strabo, *Geography* 4.6.6). However, there seem to have been expectations of more glorious military successes in the form of the conquest of Britain and Parthia (Horace, *Odes* 1.2.51–2, 1.12.53–4, 3.5.2–4). Dio (53.22, 25) says that Augustus planned an invasion of Britain while he was in Spain, but the continuing problems with the local tribes prevented it. There appears to be a repeating pattern: trouble nearer to Rome, which either had never been dealt with during the Republic, such as in the Alps or north-west Spain, or which the Romans had been distracted from dealing with during the long period of civil war, such as in Gaul, stood in the way of any grand enterprises. The one really ambitious expedition, to Arabia

Felix, ended in retreat. It can certainly be argued that most of the campaigns of the mid-20s were successful and necessary: the southern border of Egypt was secured, Gaul was brought fully under Roman control and the process of pacifying the roughest mountain areas of Spain was begun; but they were not of the kind that could justify great public celebrations.

If at first you don't succeed: the 'Second Settlement'

Augustus returned to Rome in 24. As in 29, Augustus gave 400 sesterces to every man among the Roman plebs (*Res Gestae* 15.1); once again he was voted extraordinary privileges. The Senate took an oath to uphold all the measures that he had taken or would take; this became a regular practice. Dio (53.28) records a declaration that he was free from the need to obey the laws; he is perhaps anachronistic in the sense that such an open declaration may not have been made until later in the history of the Principate, but in practice it was true since a man who held *imperium* could not be prosecuted and Augustus was clearly never going to lay down his *imperium*. His claim that he enjoyed no more power than any of his fellow magistrates was looking more dubious than ever.

Everything was not completely well in Rome. Augustus was still feeling his way towards new roles for himself and the Senate, and acceptable ways of exercising power. In 26 he had tried to appoint a Prefect of the City to take overall control of Rome in his absence abroad. The post had existed before, but had been a temporary appointment. This was to last for several years, and the Prefect would command a force of armed men. The man chosen was Messalla, who had fought for Brutus at Philippi, then switched sides to Antony and then again to Augustus; he ended up as consul for 31 before taking on a series of successful military commands. Messalla was, therefore, highly competent and a man who was acceptable to the Senate, but he resigned after six days, saying that the powers of the role were 'inappropriate to a citizen' (Jerome, *Chronicle* 26). This was not a personal quarrel: Messalla remained in Augustus' favour and was appointed Aqueducts Commissioner in 11, an important and prestigious role, and he remained a supporter of Augustus – he was the man who proposed to give Augustus the title of 'Father of the Country' in 2. But it appears that this old Republican felt uncomfortable about having command of armed men within Rome and about the degree of power that he was being asked to exercise over his fellow senators as the Emperor's deputy; or, more likely, given that he did take the job to start with, he faced so much opposition from his fellow senators that he had to pretend that he felt uncomfortable.

Once again, there was trouble with a governor of Macedonia: Marcus Primus was found guilty of treason for making war in Thrace without orders. In his defence, he alleged that Augustus had given him orders; Augustus denied it. Augustus may have been coming to regret leaving provinces like Macedonia, with large armies in them, under the Senate's control. Also during 23, Augustus, who may not have recovered fully from the sickness he suffered in Spain in 26, became very seriously ill and it was feared that he would die. (This is a 'test case' for the argument, which has at times been fashionable, that history is shaped only by large impersonal forces, mainly economic. It is

impossible to believe that, if Augustus had died at this time, with the Principate not yet fully established, there would not have been a tremendous crisis, and the history of the Roman Empire, and therefore the whole Western world, would not have been completely different.)

Ways had to be found of finding more opportunities for power and prestige for the upper class, but at the same time reducing the risk of powerful military commanders posing a threat to Rome, or at least its Emperor. At the same time, the burdens upon the Emperor had to be reduced. The 'Second Settlement' of 23 tried to address all those issues. Augustus resigned the consulship on 1 July and only ever took up the consulship twice again, at the start of the years 5 and 2, to introduce his grandsons to public life. This must have taken away some day-to-day administration from him. It also allowed at least two senators a year to be consul, creating more men qualified, as ex-consuls, for certain tasks such as governing the larger provinces, and allowing more senators to fulfil their ambitions. A second change was that Augustus was now given *maius imperium*, overriding power, in the Empire, allowing him to continue to intervene and issue orders outside his own large province, overruling other provinces' governors, even when he had stopped holding the consulship. The whole Empire was now under Augustus' legal control for as long as he held his 'province', which turned out to be for the rest of his life.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Augustus did not, in public, make much of his *maius imperium* – he does not mention it once in the *Res Gestae*. What he did publicise was the *tribunicia potestas*, power of a tribune, which he was also given this year. As noted above, he had been given some of the powers of a tribune before, in 30, even though, as a patrician, he was not allowed to be an actual tribune. The full tribunician power allowed him to summon and put proposals to the People in the Plebeian Assembly and to the Senate, so to some extent it may have made up for the loss of the consulship. There were some other powers that a tribune had, in particular the right to veto proposals of other magistrates, but it is unlikely that Augustus had any real need for them or used them (Shotter 1991: 29; Brunt and Moore 1967: 11–12; Cooley 2009: 126). The propaganda value of the *tribunicia potestas*, however, was enormous. As stated above in relation to the tribunes' *ius auxilii*, the tribunes were the men who acted for the people, protecting their interests against the powerful. Although Augustus was a patrician and, in reality, more powerful than anyone, he could present himself as the friend and protector of the people. From now on, he began to indicate dates on documents and inscriptions by stating how many years he had held the *tribunicia potestas*.

Three final measures helped to compensate Augustus for the loss of the consulship: although only of the fairly junior rank of tribune within Rome, he was allowed to put the first motion in meetings of the Senate, a right normally given to the consuls; he was also allowed to summon the Senate as often as he wished; and his *imperium* was valid within the city of Rome itself, unlike the *imperium* of other proconsuls.

Augustus' concern to win over the Senate is indicated by his choice of the man to succeed him as consul when he resigned his consulship in 23, Lucius Sestius, who had been a supporter of Brutus and continued to show his support openly, writing and speaking in his honour and keeping statues of him in his house. The other suffect consul, replacing Augustus' colleague Murena, was Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso, who had fought against Caesar in the civil war, and had also supported Brutus and Cassius. Both consuls had been living quiet lives since 30. Augustus also appointed a pair of censors for 22, another sign that there would be more room for senators' ambitions. The censors, Paullus Aemilius Lepidus and Plancus, who had suggested the name 'Augustus', were respectively the son and brother of men proscribed by the Triumvirate. However, in the event they did little. Velleius (2.95) explains that this was because the censorship was 'conducted with mutual acrimony', and he does not think much of either man: 'Paulus was too slight a man for the censor's role'; Plancus was, he reckoned, more guilty than any of the senators whose conduct he was supposed to be judging. Velleius' extreme dislike of Plancus is probably a reflection of the fact that Plancus' granddaughter Plancina was suspected of conspiring to murder the Emperor Tiberius' nephew Germanicus in AD 19. The real reason for the two men's ineffectiveness may be that Augustus kept control himself of most of the jobs done by the censors.

There was a Republican conspiracy led by Fannius Caepio, which involved a Lucius Licinius Varro Murena ('Licinius Murena': Dio 54.3; 'Lucius Murena': Velleius 2.91; 'Varro Murena': Suetonius, *Augustus* 19, *Tiberius* 8), probably the brother of Aulus Terentius Varro Murena, Augustus' fellow consul for 23. Licinius Murena had defended Primus, governor of Macedonia. Dio (54.3) describes Murena as 'notoriously rough-tongued and headstrong in his manner of address towards all alike' and as having 'uttered some rather disrespectful remarks to Augustus' during Primus' trial, commenting that, because of this, he could not be sure whether Murena really was part of Caepio's conspiracy or was wrongly suspected of it because of this reputation for strong-willed aggressiveness. The seriousness with which Augustus viewed the conspiracy is shown by the fact that Tiberius, Augustus' stepson, brought the prosecution against them. The alleged conspirators were convicted, without being brought to court, and executed.

Velleius' attempt to explain Caepio and Murena's motives goes no further than stating that 'to some the supreme felicity of the current order was intolerable' (2.91). Perhaps they regarded what had happened to Gallus, Crassus and Primus as proving that no one apart from the Emperor himself was to be allowed to rise too far; senators were not to be given the *dignitas* that they deserved: exactly the same complaint that Brutus and Cassius had had about the Roman state under Caesar. That was what was intolerable about the 'current order'.

Dio dates the conspiracy to 22, but Velleius (2.93) states that the conspiracy

happened about the time of the death of Augustus' nephew Marcellus. This places it in 23 but, since Marcellus' death certainly occurred after Augustus laid down his consulship, not before the 'Second Settlement' (contrary to Syme 1939: 333–4; Brunt and Moore 1967: 10; Scullard 1982: 213; Shotter 1991: 28). A reason for accepting Velleius' assertion that the conspiracy happened later in the year is that it makes some sense to assume that people would plot to kill Augustus at a time when he had recovered his health rather than a time when he was expected to die anyway.

Disagreements about when the conspiracy took place must be seen in the context of the larger arguments of which they are a part. The version of political history presented by Augustus himself was that there had been a single constitutional settlement that solved matters once and for all, in 28–27. Dio, the only ancient writer who wrote a political history of the Augustan age that has survived, viewed the settlement of 28–27 as by far the most important. Unlike Augustus himself, he notes further significant changes throughout the reign, but does not regard the changes of 23 as uniquely important among them. This is shown by the fact that, before writing about the 'First' Settlement, he prepares the ground by devoting almost a whole book (52) to a debate over the best way of running the state; he then spends seventeen chapters (53.2–18) on the constitutional settlement of 28–27. In contrast he devoted just one chapter to the changes of 23 (53.41). It is modern historians who created the term 'Second Settlement'. Since, as we shall see, the public did not view the changes of 23 as offering a good solution to the problem of what role Augustus should have within the political system, the case for regarding those changes as particularly important relies on the idea that they made the senators happy. If the conspiracy of Caepio and Murena occurred after the 'Second Settlement', this is evidence against that idea, which is why many modern historians have argued for an earlier date.

Suetonius tells us (*Augustus* 66) that there was a falling-out between Augustus and Maecenas because he 'betrayed to his wife Terentia the secret of the discovery of the conspiracy of Murena'. The falling-out may have had more to do with the fact that Terentia was Murena's sister, making Maecenas uncomfortably close to the conspiracy, but there is no evidence that Maecenas lost Augustus' friendship forever after the conspiracy, as is sometimes supposed. In fact, Suetonius, in this chapter, explicitly states that Augustus' annoyance at Maecenas was temporary, noting that Augustus 'did not readily make friends, but he clung to them with the utmost constancy'.

Another reason sometimes given to believe that Augustus and Maecenas fell out in Maecenas' later years is Terentia's alleged infidelity with Augustus. When, in 16, Augustus left Rome for Gaul, Dio (54.19) gives as one reason that he wanted both to dodge rumours about an affair with Terentia and, proving the rumours true, to meet with her secretly abroad. This sounds suspiciously like a memory of Antony's propaganda against Augustus. Suetonius (*Augustus* 69) says 'that he was given to adultery not even his

friends deny', but believes that, like his adoptive father Caesar, he used adultery as a political weapon: 'the more readily to get track of his adversaries' designs through the women of their households'. Sleeping with Maecenas' wife would have hurt Augustus politically, not helped him. It would be naive to deny that men do have affairs and that those affairs are often foolish and destructive; but it would be equally naive to deny that gossip is often false and rumours are often deliberately spread by political enemies.

Some have seen the problem as being not a woman, but Maecenas' lack of manliness. Maecenas liked to work hard and play soft (Velleius 2.88: 'he showed a more than feminine inclination for a life of luxurious ease'). Roman writers considered him extravagant and effeminate, for example Seneca the Younger (*Moral Epistles* (to Lucilius) 114.4–8), who was also offended by Maecenas' sloppy appearance and bad poetry. Syme (1939: 341–2) goes much further, calling him 'effeminate and sinister' and assuming that he and the 'dour ... puritan' Agrippa must have hated each other, and that the later events of 23 represent the victory of Agrippa over Maecenas. These views of Maecenas are reflected very strongly in Allan Massie's novel *Augustus*. Maecenas was bisexual, and some of the attitudes represented above arise from dangerously clichéd thinking and are not at all helpful in understanding relationships within the court.

It is true to say that Maecenas was not given any obvious political role after 23, but that would be a misleading way of putting things. The fact is that Maecenas was not given any duties that involved the obvious exercise of political power after the end of the civil war. This is unlikely to be because Augustus was displeased with Maecenas after 30; a better explanation may be that Augustus judged that, in peace time, the Senate was not yet ready for an equestrian to hold important political office within Rome: note that, for example, it took Augustus until at least AD 8 before he brought an equestrian into the administration of the grain handouts alongside senators (Brunt and Moore 1967: 44–5). Maecenas himself was, Velleius says (2.88), 'satisfied with the narrow stripe' that signified equestrian status. Horace, who was in later life almost Augustus' personal poet, wrote with affection about Maecenas as late as his fourth book of *Odes* (4.11), published in 13. Maecenas is said to have given Augustus a drinking cup on every birthday (Plutarch, *Moralia* 207.6) and, in his will, to have asked Augustus to 'look after Horace as you have looked after me' (Suetonius, *Life of Horace* 1). We do not have to believe these stories, which are about personal matters and so, naturally, impossible to prove, to think it likely that Augustus and Maecenas continued to be on good terms and that he continued to be a trusted adviser. When mentioning his death, Dio comments (55.7) that he was always able to calm Augustus down when he was angry and, contrary to the negative comments of Velleius and Seneca above, that he won the affection of the Roman people as a whole.

The right-hand man

During the thirties, the extraordinary Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa had raised a fleet and trained it, repaired aqueducts and the main sewer of Rome, and won Augustus' two most important campaigns for him. Since Actium, he had been consul with Augustus twice, in 28 and 27. In 28, he had helped to organise the census. In 27, he built the original Pantheon, in 26 rebuilt the Saepta (the 'voting pens'), and in 25 built a portico called the Basilica of Neptune and a gymnasium (Dio 53.23, 27). These buildings were all in the central part of the Campus Martius, which came to be known as the Campus Agrippae.

Agrippa's daughter Vipsania Agrippina had been betrothed to Tiberius, Augustus' older stepson, in 35, when Tiberius was seven years old and Vipsania one; they eventually married in 20 or 19. In 28, Agrippa married Augustus' niece Marcella. At that time, he might well have been considered the man closest to Augustus and the most powerful man in Rome after the Emperor. In 25, however, Augustus' seventeen-year-old nephew Marcellus married his fourteen-year-old daughter Julia. Two years later Marcellus was made aedile. Augustus had no sons; it seemed that Marcellus was being marked out as Augustus' heir.

Suetonius (*Augustus* 66) states that 'Agrippa ... because of a slight suspicion of coolness [shown by Augustus towards him] and of a preference shown for Marcellus, threw up everything and went off to Mytilene'. Other, earlier, ancient historians also have this story (Velleius 2.93; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 7.149, who mentions Marcellus' 'suspect ambitions' and Agrippa's 'banishment', admittedly in a highly exaggerated account of Augustus' misfortunes). It sounds believable – there are always rivalries and jealousies in politics, as in all jobs – and many modern historians accept it (for example, Syme 1939: 341–4, although he sees Agrippa's mission to the East not as a sign of bad temper but as indicating that he had won a power struggle against Marcellus).

However, we need to be careful. Firstly, although Suetonius had excellent access to records, including personal letters, any quarrels between Augustus and Agrippa in 23 would have been conducted in Rome, and probably face to face. Suetonius certainly does not quote any letters between them, and we have to wonder how much the writer is here relying on gossip; Velleius specifically calls the story a rumour. It should be noted that Suetonius refers to this situation again in his life of Tiberius, and gives a rather different explanation: 'Marcus Agrippa ... withdrew to Mytilene when Marcellus began his public career, so that he might not seem either to oppose or belittle him by his presence' (*Tiberius* 10). Similarly, Dio states (53.32) that Marcellus, who came from the very ancient and noble family of the Claudii, became angry at the favours shown to the *novus homo* Agrippa, rather than the other way round. The number of different versions of the reason for the

supposed conflict invites suspicion.

Secondly, the obvious sign that that Marcellus was being 'preferred to him' was his marriage to Julia. Agrippa did end up marrying Julia but, as always in studying history, we have to beware of relying too much on our knowledge of what was going to happen in the future. Agrippa had been given the first girl from the next generation of Augustus' family to reach what the Romans considered marriageable age: Marcella turned thirteen in the year 28, when Julia was only eleven. This was a great honour. Would Agrippa really have been expecting that when Julia reached thirteen or fourteen he would straight away have 'exchanged' Augustus' niece for his daughter? In fact, Agrippa himself conducted the wedding of Marcellus and Julia, since Augustus was too ill (Dio 53.27): another honour, and a sign that Agrippa did not have any objection to the marriage, unless Augustus was being extremely insensitive.

In spite of Agrippa's lack of glorious ancestors, when Augustus was afraid that he might die during 23 it was to Agrippa that he gave his signet ring, used to mark the seal on official documents, a sign that he was to take over if the worst happened. Augustus, it seems, was not going to leave the Empire in the hands of a nineteen-year-old, even if he was a nobleman and his sister's son. The fact that Augustus had demanded a consulship and commanded an army at the same age is not likely to have made him think that all nineteen-year-olds could cope with the exercise of great power. Although later Augustus' grandsons (and sons by adoption) Gaius and Lucius were designated as consuls for the years in which they turned twenty, there is no indication that Augustus thought they would have been ready to take over the running of the Empire at that age; he was ensuring that they got an accelerated political training.

Although he loved Marcellus both as son-in-law and nephew, and in addition to other honours shown him had ... helped him make a brilliant success of the festival which he gave as aedile ... nevertheless he had not entrusted to him the monarchy, but actually had preferred Agrippa before him.

(Dio 53.31)

Writing in the early third century AD, Dio shows too little understanding of the care which Augustus had to take over how his powers and position were seen when he writes baldly about his 'entrusting the monarchy' to anyone. However, the fact remains that it was Agrippa to whom Augustus gave his ring.

Marcellus, in fact, fell ill and died shortly afterwards (Dio is quite clear that Marcellus became sick after Agrippa was given the ring). Dio (53.33) mentions the rumour that 'Livia ... caused the death of Marcellus, because he had been preferred before her sons', but rightly casts doubt on it by noting

that there were severe epidemics in Rome both in 23 and in 22. Other Roman historians, and Robert Graves in his novel *I, Claudius*, suggest that Livia poisoned Marcellus and, indeed, almost everyone else in the royal family, but this ignores the unhealthiness of Rome, the uselessness of ancient medicine, and the fact that Augustus, a clever and observant man, failed to notice this supposed series of murders. Livia is portrayed as unscrupulous and ruthless, but without any real evidence, while we have plenty of evidence for the unscrupulousness and ruthlessness of Augustus himself and other men of the court. The ultimate source of these rumours may well be Scribonia, the very long-lived and probably highly politically active ex-wife of Augustus and mother of Julia.

Augustus' sorrow, and no doubt that of many Romans, is reflected in the writings of the poets: Propertius 3.18 is a lament for his death, and Virgil puts Marcellus at the end and as the climax of the parade of the souls of Roman heroes yet to be born that Aeneas sees in the Underworld (*Aeneid* 6.860–6). Marcellus was the first person to be buried in the Mausoleum that Augustus had built in 28 to be the resting place for him and his family.

Agrippa's departure for the East later that year is not necessarily evidence of a rift between him and Augustus, or even between him and Marcellus: Agrippa was a superb general and politician, and there was important business in the East. Galatia (modern central Turkey) was being organised as a province after the death of the client king Amyntas in 26, and opportunities were emerging for a deal with Parthia. Although the fact that Agrippa never went further East than Mytilene on the Greek island of Lesbos seems to add credibility to Suetonius' story (it might look as if he was not actually going to attend to these issues, since Galatia and Parthia were much further East), it is hard to believe that Agrippa was not involved with these significant developments. His decision not to travel further may have been because his job was mainly diplomatic, and he needed to stay midway between Augustus in Rome and the Parthians, to keep in close touch with both. He may also have wanted to keep an eye on what was happening just to the north of Greece, in Macedonia, whose governors had been causing so much trouble. Levick (1976: 23) suggests another reason: continuing worries about Augustus' health may have led him to stay where he could return to Rome quickly if Augustus died and he was needed in the city. He was not, in fact, away from Rome for a particularly long time: he returned in 21.

Local trouble and glory without a war

Rome was then in crisis. The ‘Second Settlement’ had coincided with a plague and a grain shortage, and this helped to make Augustus’ decision to give up the consulship deeply unpopular with the people of Rome. Augustus had restored grain supplies by defeating Sextus Pompey in 36 and brought new supplies in by conquering Egypt in 30: much of his popularity came from his being seen as the man who could make sure the Romans got their food. The people may have worried that Augustus’ resignation of the consulship, which he had held continuously since 30, implied that he no longer wanted the responsibility of ensuring the food supply.

In 23, Augustus used his own money to buy grain and distribute it for free among the city poor. His stepson Tiberius, who was, like Marcellus, only nineteen, was officially in charge of its distribution, as quaestor during this year, another sign that Augustus was looking to the future and training his family up. Tiberius’ other task this year – a further reflection of disturbed times – was to inspect the barracks where agricultural slaves were kept throughout Italy, looking for men who had been kidnapped on the roads and for free men pretending to be slaves in order to avoid military service. The plague and the grain shortage continued into 22; there were destructive lightning-storms, and the River Tiber flooded twice. There was public rioting, and the Senate, surrounded by an angry crowd which was threatening to burn down the Senate House, offered Augustus the dictatorship (Dio 54.1; *Res Gestae* 5.1), which he refused with horror (Suetonius, *Augustus* 52). There will have been some element of play-acting here, but no doubt he was genuinely frightened of ending up like Caesar if he accepted the dictatorship. He also refused an offer of the consulship every year for the rest of his life (*Res Gestae* 5.3) and the censorship for life (Dio 54.1). He did, however, accept the job of *cura annonae* (supervision of the grain supply), which Pompey had had in the late fifties.

I did not decline in the great scarcity of corn the superintendence of the supply, and I so administered it that within a few days I had freed the whole community from the immediate fear and peril through my expenditure and care.

(*Res Gestae* 5.2)

Actually, he got a pair of ex-praetors to supervise the distribution of grain in Rome, and then left for the East. The People insisted on electing him consul for 21 and, when he refused, they in turn refused to elect a second consul until Agrippa persuaded them to.

By doing this, Agrippa had once again demonstrated that Augustus needed

him. Marcellus, as mentioned above, had died in the autumn of 23. In 21, Augustus, with what looks to us like a brutal disregard for his female relatives' feelings, told Agrippa to divorce his niece Marcella and marry his widowed daughter Julia.

Father-in-law and son-in-law were both absent from Rome in 20 and 19. Augustus was still in the East, settling the affairs of Asia and Bithynia, which were officially public provinces. Agrippa went to Spain, where he ruthlessly put down the trouble in the north-west of the country, bringing to an end ten years of continuous fighting. He then embarked on a vigorous programme of Romanisation in the western provinces, bringing hill-tribes down into valleys in Spain and settling them in towns, and developing a road network centred on Lugdunum (Lyons) in Gaul.

In 30 Tiridates, a pretender to the Parthian throne, had kidnapped the infant son of the Parthian king, Phraates IV, and brought the boy to Rome. Augustus kept the child as a bargaining tool, but did not give military support to Tiridates. In 23, he sent Phraates back his son, asking in exchange for the legionary standards, booty and surviving prisoners of war captured from Crassus in 53, Decidius Saxa in 40 and Mark Antony in 36. At the same time, there was agitation in Armenia, which lay on the borders of both the Roman and Parthian Empires: there were demands for the Armenian king Artaxes II to be replaced by his brother Tigranes, who had spent ten years in Rome as a hostage. Augustus ordered Tiberius to march through Macedonia and Armenia and join him in the East. Confronted by this show of force, Phraates delivered his side of the bargain and returned the standards, booty and troops. He also sent four of his adult sons to Rome to show goodwill, and keep them far away from his throne. He had made an Italian slave-girl, Musa (sent to him as a present by Augustus) first his mistress and then his wife; she wanted their young son Phraataces to inherit the kingdom. In Armenia, Artaxes was murdered, and Tiberius installed Tigranes on the throne as a Roman client king.

This brilliant piece of aggressive diplomacy was regarded by Augustus himself as one of his greatest triumphs. The return of the standards and the 'capture' of Armenia were celebrated without restraint in coins, statues and poems: Propertius 3.4; Horace, *Epistles* 1.12.26–8; a gold coin of 18 (LACTOR 17: K19) shows an imagined temple of Mars the Avenger that was to be built on the Capitol and contain the recaptured standards (this temple was, it seems, never built); another gold coin (LACTOR 17: N42) has a picture of the goddess Victory and the words 'Armenia capta' ('Armenia captured'); a silver coin (LACTOR 17: N42) shows a Parthian, wearing trousers, which were exotic to the Romans, handing back the captured standards.

The news from Rome was less happy. At the consular elections in 20, the people once again insisted on keeping a place vacant for Augustus, and there was only one consul elected for the beginning of 19, Saturninus. A man

named Egnatius Rufus had won popularity when he was aedile in 20 by organising a fire brigade consisting of his own slaves. He had been allowed to become praetor for the next year, illegally; he later tried to stand in the elections for consul for 18. Saturninus refused to allow his candidacy; there was rioting and Egnatius allegedly formed a conspiracy against Augustus, was tried for treason and executed. There were still the dangers that had presented themselves in the late Republic: ambitious senators, sometimes made desperate because they lacked money and had got into terrible debt pursuing their ambitions (Velleius 2.91), courting popularity among the plebs and trying to manoeuvre themselves into a position where they could demand exceptional, illegal and dangerous powers. There are similarities between Egnatius and Catiline, Clodius and Caelius; and, for that matter, Pompey, Caesar and Caesar Octavian.

Augustus returned from Syria to Rome on 12 October 19. The Senate built an altar to Fortuna Redux ('Fortune the Home-bringer'—this was associating a traditional goddess, Fortuna, specifically with the Emperor) and ordered that priests and Vestal Virgins should make a sacrifice there every year on the date of his return.

Dio (54.10) tells us that Augustus was now given the right to sit between the consuls of the year and have the *fascēs*. He also says that Augustus was given consular power for life. There is much to suggest that Dio is right. The 'Second Settlement' had not been very successful and further radical change to Augustus' position was needed. The consular *imperium* gave him greater power within the city than he had had just from the *tribunicia potestas* or the right to exercise proconsular *imperium* (which was strictly defined) within the city, but it did not load him with extra administration or keep others from becoming consul. It was an indication that Augustus was still committed to looking after the people's needs, which explains why the protests stopped. Augustus could, with some justification, tell the Senate that he had only accepted this power with great reluctance, having refused a perpetual dictatorship or consulship in spite of enormous pressure from the people. It fits with Augustus taking tribunician and censorial powers without taking the offices of tribune or censor.

Agrippa had kept on a trained staff of slaves since he was aedile in 33 to work on the aqueducts, and been given an official title *curator aquarum* (Frontinus, *Aqueducts of Rome* 98). As if to underline the point that the people could rely on Augustus and his closest allies to look after their needs, in 19 he completed the Aqua Virgo, another aqueduct which further improved the supply of water to the city.

Augustus further reduced the numbers in the Senate in 18, to 600, the size it had been after Sulla's dictatorship in 80. This second revision of the roll of the Senate could be seen as returning the Senate to the size and exclusivity that it had had before the civil wars.

At the time of the First Settlement of 27, when he was given his large

province for ten years, Augustus had claimed that he would give up control of some or all of it before then if conditions allowed him to do so. Inevitably, instead, when the ten years were up at the end of 18, he was given control of the 'province' for another five years. At the same time, Agrippa was given *tribunicia potestas* alongside Augustus, and almost certainly some form of *imperium*. It was clear that Augustus had his 'province' and his powers for life; and he had a colleague of his own choosing, to whom his powers could pass in an emergency and whose sons, Augustus' grandsons, might, when the time came, take the throne. Twelve years after Antony's death, Augustus was still ruler of Rome and, it could be said, was establishing a royal family.

14

THE FIRST FAMILY, 18–2

Procreation for the nation: fathering the fatherland

Augustus concerned himself a great deal with moral and social issues. In 18, he had two laws passed, the *lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus* ('Julian law on marriage categories') and the *lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis* ('Julian law on restricting adultery'). He used his tribunician power to bring these measures before the Plebeian Assembly (*Res Gestae* 6.2).

The first was to encourage marriage and the production of children. All male citizens between twenty-five and sixty, and all women of citizen families between twenty and fifty, were expected to marry; there were penalties for those who did not, and for those who married but did not have children. The most severe penalties were the strict limits on their rights of inheritance: unmarried and childless men and women could not inherit from anyone other than their close relatives; there were even restrictions on the amount that husbands and wives could leave to each other in their wills, which varied according to the number of children that they had. This could lead to serious economic and social disadvantage. Since membership of the senatorial and equestrian classes was dependent on the amount of money and property owned, unmarried and childless members of the upper classes might well lose their social status through these restrictions on inheritance. This did not go down well; it was particularly cruel to those couples who found that they could not have children, who might have commented, in private, that their misfortune was shared by the Emperor and his wife. Suetonius (*Augustus* 34) records 'an open revolt against its provisions', and a demonstration by the *equites* at a public entertainment, which must date to late in the reign since Suetonius mentions that Augustus showed off some of his great-grandchildren (the oldest of whom was born in AD 6) to demonstrate the joys of large families.

In later years, therefore, Augustus modified the measures, through the *lex Papia Poppaea* of AD 9. Papius and Poppaeus were the suffect consuls of the year; the fact that this time Augustus did not put his own name to the law may be a further indication of the unpopularity of such legislation. Dio (56.10) comments that Papius and Poppaeus were both bachelors with no children. Under the new law, those who were unmarried but childless were allowed to receive one half of inheritances. In some cases penalties were replaced by rewards for those who were engaged or married, and those who had children. Those who had at least three children, and were therefore expanding their families, since they were doing one better than merely 'replacing' themselves, got the greatest rewards. However, the somewhat gentler approach did not mean that Augustus was becoming a soft touch: as men were avoiding penalties and gaining privileges by becoming engaged to infant girls, it was made compulsory for an engagement to result in marriage within two years. (Dio 54.16 reports this under the year 18, but it looks like the closing of a

loophole, and so seems more likely to be part of the new law than the old; in fact Dio seems to contradict his own statement when in a speech he represents Augustus as delivering early in AD 9, he mentions that men were ‘cheating’ by getting engaged to young girls.)

The second law of 18, for the first time in Roman history, made adultery a crime, at least for married women and their lovers (unfaithful husbands do not seem to have been included). After divorcing his wife for adultery, a man could prosecute his wife and her lover, with penalties including banishment to an island (different islands for the wife and the lover), the loss of much of their property and restrictions on their citizen rights. Women who had been found guilty of adultery were probably not allowed afterwards to marry free men. A husband whose wife had committed adultery but who did not divorce her could be prosecuted as a pimp.

Rumours of Augustus’ unfaithfulness with Maecenas’ wife Terentia have already been mentioned, and Suetonius (*Augustus* 69–71) repeats other stories about Augustus’ supposed repeated unfaithfulness to Livia, although it is hard to tell whether or not these were invented by his enemies. However, the second Julian law in particular has often been used as evidence that Augustus was puritanical about sex in his public attitudes. That, however, is not the only explanation for these laws. It is important to take the two laws of 18 together: there is, overall, an emphasis on children and a concern not only with sex but also with class. It is worth noting that, given the penalties for those who did not have children, the legislation actually encouraged divorce and remarriage when couples could not have children together. Also, although *univirae*, women who had only ever had one husband, were accorded great respect in Roman society (see, for example, the boast of being a *univira* in a woman’s funeral inscription near Corfinum, LACTOR 17: T38), widows who did not remarry after a set time suffered the penalties imposed on the unmarried.

One of the rewards for married men who fathered children was the right to stand for political offices below the normal minimum age, one year for each child. Another, mentioned in Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights* 2.15.4, was that, by the *lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus*, the ‘senior’ consul of each pair was not the older one, but the one who had more children. These rights, which will have mattered to very few citizens, show that a major concern of the *lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus* and *lex Papia Poppaea* was to keep up the numbers of children in families of the upper class. Equally, there is evidence that some of the most important provisions in these laws were not applied to the ‘lower classes’: a legal handbook used in Egypt (the wonderfully named *Gnomon of the Idios Logos*) states that unmarried men who had property less than 100,000 sesterces, and unmarried women with less than 50,000, were not subject to any restrictions on inheritance. Given these generous limits, many people who could not be described as poor will have been exempted from penalties; this emphasises the point that the laws were strongly concerned with the ‘top’ social classes.

However, there was one way in which the *lex Julia de maritandis ordinibus* encouraged marriage and the production of legitimate children among ordinary citizens as well. On the one hand, it barred senators from marrying women who were freed slaves ('freedwomen') or actors, or the daughters of actors. (Actors' business was deceit, since they pretended to be other people, and they moved from place to place to make a living. Therefore the Romans regarded them as unrespectable, as much on the margins of 'proper' society as prostitutes, however much 'proper' society enjoyed their services. For exactly the same reasons, however, the Greeks, at least from the fourth century BC onwards, often gave actors the high-status job of ambassador.) On the other hand, perhaps much more importantly, it gave legal status to marriages between the freeborn and the freed, and made their offspring legitimate. Dio (54.16) sees this provision as being principally concerned with the marriage of freeborn men and freedwomen 'since the free-born population contained far more males than females'; this is likely to be true, as until the twentieth century very high rates of death in childbirth ensured that men usually outnumbered women. The law recognised the reality that free and freed often lived together and had children; by making their unions and offspring legitimate it gave those children a chance to learn Roman family values, and encouraged men who could not find a freeborn wife to have children in the knowledge that they would be legally protected and inherit the family name, along with their father's full citizen status. Just as Augustus was looking to keep up the numbers of the upper classes within the citizen population, so he was keen to keep up the numbers of the citizen population within the total population of Italy and the Empire.

Looked at in the context of concerns over social class, inheritance and citizenship, then, much about the *lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis* becomes clearer. In particular, an explanation can be found for the double standards by which an adulterous wife and her lover could be punished, but no punishments were laid down for an adulterous husband. If Augustus was particularly concerned to ensure that the birth-rates among the upper classes and among the citizen body remained high, it was necessary that everyone could be certain who the parents of a child were. Anyone who is around at the time of childbirth can get good visual and physical evidence that a child comes from its mother. In the days before DNA testing, it was not nearly so easy to be absolutely certain of who the father was. That is why adultery on the part of wives had to be strongly discouraged. If a man had been unfaithful, this mattered less; what really mattered was that his wife's children were definitely his.

However, it is not possible to relate all of this legislation purely to concerns about class and children. As well as adultery, the *lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis* outlawed *stuprum*; the penalty, as for adultery, was the loss of half the man's property. *Stuprum* was defined as sex with a virgin, unmarried woman (including a widow), or boy. It is possible to see the outlawing of sex

with unmarried women as related to the concerns discussed above, especially as sex with unmarried slaves and freedwomen was not outlawed: affairs with unmarried free women, it could be argued, were discouraging those women from marrying, and there was a danger of producing illegitimate children who would not join the body of citizens, or the class to which their parents belonged. The Digest of Roman laws compiled in the sixth century AD sums up *stuprum* as the offence committed by a man who 'keeps a free woman for an affair, not marriage'. However, the outlawing of sex with 'boys' (it must be remembered that the Romans classed as 'boys' many whom we would define as adults – this is not an issue of paedophilia) does make it difficult to argue that there is no element of sexual prudery or discrimination in the legislation. The Greeks and Romans had not usually displayed intolerance of homosexuality before this, and they had certainly not considered it to be a matter in which the law should be involved.

These laws between them defied all precedent in the extent to which the state was allowed to interfere in private matters and in the disposal of private property. In some individual details Galinsky (1996: 137) may be right to talk about 'the consolidation of a received system', but the overall concept can certainly be regarded as revolutionary.

A still more powerful sign that personal freedoms were to be restricted in Augustus' Rome was the fact that the law set penalties not only for committing adultery or *stuprum*, but even for 'encouraging' it. The concept of 'encouragement' can be defined quite loosely, and jurymen who knew that these things were of concern to the Emperor might be easily persuaded to hand out guilty verdicts. Rome was becoming a place where people could find themselves in danger of sudden unexpected prosecution and punishment. It is probably not a coincidence that the class of people known as *delatores* (professional informers), who were to become so hated in the reigns of Augustus' successors, made themselves especially busy accusing prominent men of breaking these particular laws (Tacitus, *Annals* 3.25).

Augustus the priest

In the *Res Gestae* (7.3), Augustus lists seven priestly offices that he held, three of which were among those that he himself revived after they had died out during the late Republic. By holding so many priesthoods (by tradition, even the most eminent nobles held only one), Augustus showed his deep concern with traditional religion. Coins frequently show symbols of priesthoods held by Augustus or otherwise associated with him (LACTOR 17: L1–2).

In matters of religion, as much as in matters of politics, Augustus tried to present himself as an upholder and reviver of tradition. However, Augustus can be seen as guilty of what is called ‘the invention of tradition’. To suit his own ends, Augustus frequently manipulated religious traditions, and, when that was not enough, he made them up. All societies invent traditions (a classic example is the image of Santa Claus made by Coca Cola some 100 years ago); what was new, for Rome, was that one man was in charge of deciding on what the society’s traditions were, and his inventions were nearly always done consciously.

One of his priesthoods was membership of a ‘College of Fifteen’ (actually, numbers varied) concerned with the Sibylline Books of supposedly ancient prophecies. In 18, Augustus did away with other more modern ‘prophetic verses’. This was a measure that both fitted in with Augustus’ claims to be restoring traditional religion and was politically useful, since it was not helpful to Augustus to have alarming or rebellious ‘prophecies’ made public. He edited the Sibylline Books and kept them in the Temple of Palatine Apollo by his house. The reason given by Dio (54.17), that this was done because ‘the Sibylline verses ... had become indistinct through lapse of time’, no doubt comes from Augustus’ propaganda.

The College of Fifteen organised the great religious festival of the Ludi Saeculares (the New Era Games). Our main source for the timing of this festival is Censorinus, a third-century AD writer interested in grammar and in ways of measuring and calculating time.

The Ludi Saeculares were held only once every *saeculum*, defined by Censorinus (17.2) as ‘the longest span of human life from birth to death’. Traditionally, the *saeculum* was reckoned to be a hundred years (17.8). Only four Ludi Saeculares had ever been held. The evidence from historians (collected by Censorinus, 17.10–11) was that the earliest games had not, in fact, occurred at regular intervals: the first two had taken place in 509 and 346. After that, however, games were held at intervals close to 100 years: in 249, ninety-seven years after the previous one, and then in either 149 or 146. It seems that another set of Ludi Saeculares had been due in either 49 or 46, but civil war had prevented it.

Clearly, however, in the view of Augustus and the other members of the College of Fifteen, including Agrippa, it was now that it was most suitable to

hold the Ludi Saeculares. The return of stable government indicated that a new age was beginning. Luckily, a Sibylline oracle (quoted in Zosimus 2.6.1) was discovered, which proclaimed that ‘the longest span of life for mortal man’ was in fact ‘one hundred years and ten’. The College of Fifteen looked into the history of the Games, and found that they had occurred at much more regular intervals than the historians, without the benefit of Augustus’ advice, had realised. The time from one set of Ludi Saeculares to the next had, in fact, ranged from 108 to 111 years: the first was held in 455, the next in 344, the third in 236 and the fourth in 126.¹ Therefore, 17 was a good time to hold the Games again.

The *lex Julia de maritibus ordinandis*, passed just the previous year, seems to have had a major influence on proceedings. ‘Leading Roman matrons’ (Zosimus 2.5.4) – that is, respectable married ladies with children – played a prominent role, particularly on the second day, when they offered prayers and sang hymns on the Capitol; Augustus’ family were named in the prayers. Sacrifices were made to the goddesses of labour pains and childbirth, the Ilithyiae. ‘Prosper the marriage law, that it may be/Fruitful of children’ wrote Horace in the *Carmen Saeculare*, lines 19–20; he was unmarried and bisexual, but loyal to his political master. Traditionally, the Ludi Saeculares were particularly associated with the gods of the underworld, but these Games were more about new life than death. In the opening ceremony of sacrifice to the Fates, the prosperity of Rome was the central theme (LACTOR 17: L27j); it was linked closely with the fertility of its inhabitants.

However, unmarried citizens, who were forbidden from certain religious festivals, were specifically allowed to attend the Games, on the grounds that, since they would have only one chance to take part in their entire lifetimes, making them wait until they were married would mean that this one chance would be lost to them forever (inscription, LACTOR 17: L27g).

The Ludi Saeculares were celebrated from the night of 31 May to the day of 3 June. Apollo, his sister Diana, and his mother Latona were very prominent; this shows the influence of Augustus on these Games: they were a triad of gods special to the Emperor, alongside (and equal to) the long-established triad of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva on the Capitol. In 13, Lepidus died.

I refused to become *pontifex maximus* in place of my colleague while he was alive, when the people offered me that priesthood, which my father had held. However, some years later, after the death of the man who had taken advantage of civil unrest to appropriate it, I accepted the priesthood.

(*Res Gestae* 10.2)

Augustus had made a show of not taking the office of Chief Priest from Lepidus after Lepidus was sacked as a Triumvir; this demonstrated that he

was respectful of tradition and the law, although we might wonder how easily Lepidus had been able to carry out his job in the years since 36, since he had been kept under guard in the country town of Circeii. To underline the point even further, since March was the traditional month for the *pontifex maximus* to take up office, Augustus waited until 6 March 12. The fact that Lepidus himself had secured the office, as Augustus stresses in the extract above, without election made Augustus' respect for due process even more impressive. (In fact, Lepidus' appointment was not quite as irregular as suggested here or in Velleius 2.63; although the *pontifex maximus* had been elected since the third century, selection by fellow priests had been the traditional method of appointing the other *pontifices* until 104 and again for nearly twenty years after Sulla.) Under Augustus, the *pontifex maximus* became not only the most prestigious of the priests, but the one who oversaw the whole religious life of Rome.

One aspect of the job was not attractive to Augustus, however. The *pontifex maximus* was supposed to live in the Domus Publica, a building next to the Temple of Vesta in the Roman Forum. Augustus' existing house on the Palatine was convenient for him: he had made the house and its location part of his propaganda. Augustus decided that he would fulfil the requirement to live next to the home of Vesta by dedicating a shrine to Vesta in his house. By linking Vesta to the *penates* of his household, he made his own house a centre of state religion (Cooley 2009: 148). It is part of a pattern in which Augustus removed a number of significant functions from places within the Forum, reassigning them to buildings that he had created (Favro 1996: 199–206). The ingenious move made more of his home into public land, and he also increased the space available to the Vestal Virgins, who took over the Domus Publica. Even so, the move is so clever in the way that it treats Roman traditions that it might be regarded as cynical.

Commander-in-chief

From at least 40, Caesar Octavian had called himself *Imperator Caesar*, making the title *imperator* ('successful general') his first name, as descendants of Julius Caesar were entitled to do. The name, from which 'Emperor' is derived, emphasises the military basis for the rule of Augustus and his successors. Luckily for Augustus, who was never a great general, his position as commander-in-chief meant that, just as he could be awarded Triumphs and supplications for victories won by other generals, he could be acclaimed *imperator* for others' successes. He was *imperator* twenty one times (*Res Gestae* 4.1), the first nine for his own victories (the last in 20), but the rest for victories won by members of his family (starting in 15). From 29, he had the right to wear at all public festivals the crown that until then was only worn at Triumphs (Dio 51.20), so he seemed to be continually celebrating a Triumph: others were triumphators on particular occasions, but Augustus was a triumphator, as well as an *imperator*, continually – not as a result of particular achievements, but because it was, as it were, part of his nature.

The relationship between Emperor and army, and the role of the army within the state, were clearly vital to the success of Augustus' new regime. There had been terrible consequences from the Republic's lack of a standing (that is, permanent and professional) army. Soldiers were recruited for a specific campaign and then dismissed: this meant an army that was only set up to respond to emergencies. Recruitment was in the hands of individual generals; so too were the rewarding of soldiers and care for them after they were demobilised; this led to soldiers' being loyal to their general and not to the state. Civil war had also led to the number of soldiers within the Empire becoming appallingly high, far higher than the economy could support.

Augustus established a standing army. He, rather than the officers (*legati*) who commanded legions or took charge of whole provinces, was their commander. At the beginning of each year, the soldiers swore an oath to him. In the *Res Gestae*, he refers to 'my fleet' (26.4) and 'my army' (30.2), not in relation to the time of civil war, when each rival for power had in effect private forces, but referring to events during his reign (Cooley 2009: 25).

The number of Roman citizens serving in the army by the end of Augustus' reign was in the region of 140,000: around 125,000 men in twenty-five legions (each legion was officially 6,200 men strong on paper, but it is not likely that they were all at full strength at any time and a figure of 5,000 men per legion is probably nearer the truth); nine praetorian cohorts of 1,000 men each; four urban cohorts of 1,500 men each, three in Rome and one guarding the mint at Lyons. Even with the non-citizens who served as auxiliary soldiers, the Roman army was small in relation to the military needs of a large empire, and had to be intelligently deployed.

Legions consisted mainly of heavy infantry; for generations, the Romans had looked to their allies and subjects to supply light infantry and cavalry. As in so many things, Augustus gave shape and organisation to what had been haphazard. He established permanent units of these auxiliary troops (*auxilia*). Each unit consisted of 500 or 1,000 men, and infantry was separated from cavalry. They were usually commanded by officers from the equestrian class.

The Roman fleet, always very much inferior to the army, had also lacked permanence and central organisation. Augustus divided it into two squadrons, one based at Ravenna in north-east Italy and one at Misenum in the Bay of Naples, each commanded by a prefect from the equestrian class.

Some soldiers could do very well for themselves. Although the top officers were from the senatorial and equestrian classes, there were sixty centurions in each legion, most of whom were promoted from the ranks, and other positions of responsibility such as *praefectus castrorum* (quartermaster) and *praefectus fabrum* or *fabrorum* (chief engineer). There were senior centurions called *primi ordines*, and the chief centurion in each legion was known as the *primus pilus*. All centurions could look forward to reasonable comfort after discharge; a *primus pilus* would join the equestrian class. The army offered one of the best opportunities for social advancement in the Roman Empire.

The newly organised auxiliary troops continued to be recruited from non-citizens, usually in the imperial provinces. Joining the *auxilia* gave non-citizens the chance to become involved in the defence of the Empire; after a period of service that was eventually fixed at twenty-five years, the auxiliary soldiers became Roman citizens.

The legions and auxiliaries were based on the frontiers of the Empire, but there were soldiers in the heart of the Empire as well. In the late Republic, generals had kept a bodyguard known as a praetorian guard. Augustus developed his into a body of 9,000 infantrymen with some cavalry, who were stationed in towns near Rome, although they went with the emperor when he was on campaign. They were commanded by one or two prefects from the equestrian class. The Prefects of the Praetorian Guard were among the most powerful men in the Empire. The Guards were, in effect, the Emperor's private army. As mentioned above, their pay became twice that of regular soldiers after the 'First Settlement' of 27; later, they were paid three times what others received. There were also the three units of urban guards stationed in or just outside Rome, who were less well paid. By tradition, because of the fear of violence in Rome, no general had been allowed to bring troops into the city. Praetorians and urban guards, however, could enter Rome, and in the settlement of 23 it was specifically recognised that Augustus could keep his *imperium*, which meant above all the power to command troops, within the city.

Land was continually being found to provide discharged soldiers with somewhere to settle. In total, in the course of his reign, Augustus spent 600 million sesterces on buying land for soldiers in Italy. 260 million was also

spent on land in the provinces.

Until 13, then, Augustus acted very much as the generals of the Republic had, though on a grander scale: his soldiers served for unspecified periods of time, and on discharge they were provided with land. In that year, however, he significantly changed the conditions of service, taking another step away from the *ad hoc* arrangements of the Republic. The period of service for legionnaires was fixed at sixteen years (twelve for the Praetorian Guard), followed by four years in the reserves. From now on, veteran soldiers were usually, though not always, given money rather than land; the amount was fixed in advance for each type of soldier (Dio 54.25). Between 7 and 2 'I paid cash rewards to the soldiers who had served their time and whom I settled in their home towns, and on this I spent about 400 million sesterces' (*Res Gestae* 16.2).

Augustus had, it appeared, found a successful new system that was satisfying the soldiers while allowing proper financial planning. It is one of the great achievements of the middle part of his reign. As we shall see in the next chapter, however, Augustus' system came under severe strain as events made it impossible for him to let soldiers retire at the promised time.

First among equals: Emperor and Senate

In the years following the battle of Actium, there was great fear of the return of civil war, and stringent restrictions were placed upon senators. In 29, Augustus even 'forbade all members of the senate to go outside Italy, unless he himself should command or permit them to do so' (Dio 52.42). While immediate panic subsided as Augustus' reign went on, he continued to keep careful control of the senators.

A *cura legum morumque* (supervision of laws and morals) was voted to Augustus three times, in 19, 18 and 11, 'with supreme power and without a colleague'. After telling us this, Augustus states that he refused to accept any office offered to him that was 'contrary to ancestral tradition' (*Res Gestae* 6.1). However, Suetonius states that he 'accepted control of morals and laws for life' (*Augustus* 17). Suetonius' evidence on constitutional matters can perhaps be dismissed: he was not very interested in them. Dio was, however, and he says that Augustus 'accepted an election ... to the position of supervisor of morals for five years' in 19 (54.10), and again for another five years in 12 (54.30), commenting that 'he received this office also for limited periods, as he did the monarchy', by which Dio means his proconsular command and the tribunician power. Dio's evidence need not be rejected. Augustus is not saying in the *Res Gestae* that he did not accept any kind of 'supervision of laws and morals' (a function of the censors); in fact, he does not actually state that he rejected the *cura legum morumque* at all. As usual, he is emphasising that he would not take any powers that looked kingly or dictatorial.

It may be helpful to look at sections 5 and 6 of the *Res Gestae* together. In section 5, Augustus says first that he refused to accept the dictatorship, but then stresses that, by accepting a position that did not give him extraordinary powers, he dealt with the problem that was leading to the people's agitation, in this case the shortage of grain. Section 6 follows the same pattern: Augustus was offered the supervision of laws and morals with supreme power and without a colleague; he implies that he refused the offer but, by using his tribunician powers, brought in the measures 'which the senate then wanted me to take'. In each case (1) Augustus is doing what others want him to do, acting as the servant of the Senate and People; (2) he refuses excessive powers that others are begging him to take; (3) using instead limited, constitutional powers, he still succeeds in fulfilling the Senate's and People's wishes.

Where Augustus has muddled the waters in section 6 of the *Res Gestae* is by focusing on the issue of moral and social legislation, for which, as for any legislation, the tribunician powers were enough. He did repeatedly take on the powers of a censor to conduct revisions of the Senate and censuses – such activities went beyond the powers of a tribune; and he did not always share these censorial powers – in 8, the second occasion on which he conducted a

census, he did so without a colleague, as he tells us himself (*Res Gestae* 8.3). In 8.3–4, Augustus states that he used his consular power to conduct censuses of Roman citizens (in Italy and the provinces as well as in Rome itself) in 8 and AD 14. The censorship was the most prestigious and powerful of the Republican magistracies, and Augustus wants credit for not taking the office of censor or the full range of its powers. There was precedent for consuls conducting censuses, although it dated back to the fifth century BC. Brunt and Moore (1967: 46) argue that, to put the matter beyond doubt, the Senate specifically gave Augustus permission to use his consular power to take the census in 8 and AD 14. However, in 8.2 Augustus is silent about the powers that he used in conducting his first census with Agrippa in 28, and the powers that he used in revising the roll of the senate, which he says he did three times. There is clear evidence that Augustus and Agrippa did have a grant of censorial power when they conducted their census of 28. Augustus may well also have received censorial power for his revisions of the senatorial roll, feeling that he needed the Senate itself to give him specific powers for this job, which was rather more politically delicate than conducting a census of citizens: the early revisions, at least, brought Augustus great unpopularity (Dio 54.14–15).

So Augustus may well have accepted temporary censorial power, as he and Agrippa had done in 28, repeatedly. Unless, however, he is coming closer to simply lying than he can be shown to do elsewhere in the *Res Gestae*, Augustus must have accepted powers in 19/18 and in 12/11 that were in some way more restricted than those he was offered, so that they could be represented as not involving ‘supreme power’—a slippery concept, which Augustus could define in whatever way was most helpful to him.

It should be noted that the ineffective censors of 22 were the last pair of senators ever to hold the censorship. The office gave its holder the right to decide on who could be a senator and who could be a citizen, and it involved the overseeing of public morals. An emperor could not allow anyone else either to have that degree of power or to be seen as the judge of decency and guarantor of the nation’s moral health.

Instead of following the Republican tradition of calling on the consuls to speak and vote in the Senate in order of precedence, the oldest or most distinguished first, Augustus would call upon them at random. Suetonius (*Augustus* 35) says that this was so that all the ex-consuls, however recent or undistinguished, would have to be ready to say something instead of just muttering ‘I agree with the previous speaker’. But it also showed the Senate who was in control. Dio (54.15) tells us that it was one way in which Augustus used to humiliate Lepidus: before he was expelled from the Senate in 18, Lepidus would always be called on last of all the ex-consuls to vote. However, Dio also tells us (55.34) that, although he had the right as *princeps senatus* to give his opinion first in a debate in the Senate, he used to do so among the last.

In 28, 'as, indeed, he often did subsequently' (Dio 53.2), Augustus personally chose out of the praetors the man who would take the most important position, that of *praetor urbanus*. In the Republic, this position had been taken by the man who had received the most votes, but the People's votes were coming to be less and less important.

Powerful men in the Republic had had a group of political allies (*amici*) who advised them; this was called a *consilium*. As often, Augustus took this tradition but made the practice more formal, regular and official. He would ask the consuls, one each of all the other magistrates, and fifteen other men chosen by lot from the rest of the Senate to be his *consilium*. The *consilium* would change every six months. Only after taking advice from this group would Augustus put a proposal to the whole Senate.

Although he made a point of publicly consulting with the senators when proposing laws to the Senate (see, for example, Dio 55.4), with his tribunician power Augustus could take proposals straight to the Plebeian Assembly; he did this with the two Julian marriage laws of 18.

In 16, Augustus left Rome for Gaul. Agrippa was also away from Rome at this time, in Syria. Augustus appointed Statilius Taurus, a *novus homo* but a highly successful general and distinguished ex-consul, as Prefect of the City. Statilius Taurus did not have the same hesitation, or did not face the same opposition, as Messalla had done a decade before, and served his full term. It is essential, when considering the relationship between Augustus and the Senate and the extent to which senators were involved in the administration of Rome, to remember that, until he was in his mid-fifties, Augustus was very frequently away from the city. He returned to Rome in 13, but did not stay; he spent most of his time in Lugdunum (Lyons) during the years 12–9, keeping a close watch on events in Gaul and Germany.

Augustus reduced the powers of the aediles, who had responsibility for the games, public buildings and public services of Rome (Dio 53.2, dated to 28, although Marcellus put on the Roman Games when he was aedile in 23). The office had given opportunities for rich and ambitious senators to win huge popularity with the people; it was essential that the people now looked only to the Emperor and his friends to take care of their public amenities and entertainments.

Anything that allowed individual senators to become dangerously popular could not be permitted. Controls were placed on the giving of public banquets: some were abolished, others reduced in scale. Festivals, now all administered by the praetors rather than the aediles, were paid for from the public treasury and, as a rule, no individual praetor was allowed to use his private money to supplement the public funds. Augustus, however, would allow some praetors to spend up to three times the official amount, at his discretion. Gladiatorial shows could only be put on if the Senate authorised them; they could not take place more than twice a year, and there could be no more than 120 fighters in each show. (Dio 54.2 states that all these measures

were taken in 22, but they may belong to different years.)

In 19, Cornelius Balbus celebrated the last Triumph ever awarded to someone outside the imperial family. It may be significant that in this same year, seven months later, Augustus returned to Rome with the standards from Parthia, celebrating this achievement in the manner of a Triumph. In 14, after military success in the Black Sea, Agrippa declined to accept a Triumph voted for him, as he had done before in 37 and 19, and even chose not to send reports to the Senate to inform them and the public of his achievements. Sensibly taking their cue from Agrippa, other victorious generals after this time stopped sending reports that boasted about their achievements, and did not demand Triumphs, accepting instead 'triumphal honours'—just the ornaments and robes – which were prestigious but did not involve a great public display of military success by someone who was not the emperor. Even Augustus' stepson Tiberius, by then also his son-in-law, though voted a Triumph by the Senate after his campaigns in Pannonia in 12, was simply given triumphal honours by Augustus. In 11, Tiberius' brother Nero Drusus was also awarded triumphal honours, but Augustus did not allow him to be called *imperator*, even though his troops had addressed him as such (the usual basis for awarding the title); instead, as commander-in-chief, the emperor himself was acclaimed as *imperator* yet again. Tiberius did get a ceremony after success in the Balkans in 9, but it was the minor honour of an ovation rather than a full triumph: a smaller-scale affair, in which, for example, the general rode on a horse rather than in a chariot.

There are reports of a degree of free speech among senators, at least in the earlier parts of Augustus' reign. In 18, Antistius Labeo, the son of a strong supporter of Brutus, argued for keeping Lepidus within the Senate, to Augustus' extreme annoyance. Writing in the early second century, Tacitus (*Annals* 3.75) claims that Labeo's independence of mind cost him the consulship, although he did become praetor. This in itself, however, scarcely suggests that Augustus can be compared with Stalin. It should be noted, however, that reports of Augustus' tolerance of opposing views, often found in the writings of Tacitus and Seneca, may be exaggerated as these authors want to point up a contrast with the attitudes of Tiberius and other later emperors.

Augustus faced a number of real or alleged plots. Naturally, finding out the truth about these is particularly difficult. Dio warns us that he has not even tried (54.15): 'it is my purpose to report in all such cases simply the recorded version of the affair, without busying myself with anything beyond the published account, except in perfectly patent cases, or giving a hint as to the justice or injustice of the act or as to the truth or falsity of the report'. In 16, Cornelius Cinna was accused of preparing to kill Augustus. Cinna was a nobleman, the grandson of Pompey the Great. Many years later, in AD 5, Cinna was consul. Seneca the Younger (*Concerning Clemency* 1.9.3) comments that 'by this stage of his career, Augustus was incapable of killing

even one man'. Perhaps it was not so much that he was incapable of killing one man as that he did not need to, and he could gain much more by sparing his enemies punishment. It was, perhaps, punishment enough that Cinna had to be personally grateful to Augustus for being allowed to be consul. When he died, Cinna left everything to Augustus in his will.

This is the last time that we hear of a conspiracy against Augustus from the nobility, at least until the exile of his daughter Julia. (There seems no reason to accept the dating of Dio 55.14, who puts Cinna's plot in AD 4. Dio is a much later source than Seneca, and has probably been influenced by the fact that Cinna's consulship was in AD 5. If Cinna plotted against Augustus' life one year and was consul the next, this makes for an extraordinary and dramatic proof of Augustus' clemency; but it is hard to believe that his rehabilitation was so quick.) It is not obvious that Augustus had done much in the decade since 27 to reduce the causes for dissatisfaction among the nobility. However, since 19 the plebs had stopped their regular protests, so that those who wished to revolt against Augustus were becoming less confident of winning enough popular support to make success a realistic prospect.

There was no disguising the extent of Augustus' power relative to the Senate's. His power rested, as it had done ever since 44, on his support from the soldiers and from his wealth, which was, as Crassus, Pompey and Caesar's had been, greater than that of the state. In fact, the state could not function without Augustus' money. He gave money to the state treasury (the *aerarium*) four times, as he records in *Res Gestae* 17.1: the total sum was 150 million sesterces.

Often, and increasingly as his reign went on, Augustus was treated with extraordinary respect by the Senate. Great honours were given to Augustus on his returns to Rome: the building of an Altar of Augustan Peace was decreed by the Senate in 13; in 8, he accepted the honour of his birthday being celebrated every year by horse racing in the Circus Maximus; and the month of Sextilis was given the name August, because in that month he had started his first consulship in 43, won the 'battle of Alexandria' in 30, and celebrated his great triple Triumph in 29.

On 5 February 2, the Senate decreed that Augustus should be given the title of *pater patriae*, 'Father of the Country'. People had addressed him as such before, but the Senate's decree made it official. This was the supreme honour that could be given to any senator. He used the title frequently on coinage. The day was declared a yearly public holiday. In AD 14, this honour still formed the climax to Augustus' *Res Gestae*: it is the last thing that he mentions (35.1).

Making plans for Gaius: the succession

In 23, after he recovered from his serious illness, Augustus brought his will into the Senate, claiming that he intended to read it aloud. The senators refused to allow it, since it would have been ill omened, as Augustus would have known was bound to happen. Augustus' intention, so Dio says (53.31), was 'showing people that he had left no successor to his realm'. However, Augustus would have been as concerned as any other Roman noble to have an heir within his family, and both he and the Romans will have been afraid of a return to civil war if the state was left without a leader after Augustus' death. Augustus himself had come to power in the first place because he was Caesar's heir. It was not so easy to separate the issues of who would be Augustus' private heir and who would inherit his power.

Augustus' closest ally, Agrippa, was as old as Augustus himself – not, perhaps, so important when it seemed that Augustus was about to die, but obviously something that would have made him seem a much less suitable successor once Augustus had recovered and seemed likely to live for a long time to come. He was also from a little-known family from outside Rome. There were significant changes to the ruling class during Augustus' reign. The great noble families of the Republic, who had lost many members in the civil wars, declined in importance, while rich and important families from the towns of Italy came to supply more and more of the Senate. (The fame of men from outside Rome who entered the Senate during the Republic, such as Cato the Elder, Marius and Cicero, can lead us to forget that there were very few of them, and they almost always came from towns close to Rome.) However, we should be careful to distinguish the Senate as a body from its leading members. Syme made a very thorough study of the names and families of the Roman politicians of Augustus' reign, and he points out (1939: 362) that in the middle of the reign the nobles re-established their grip on the consulship: 'there are in all the years 15 BC–AD 3 very few consuls who are not of consular families'.

The evidence from later years does not help us to come to a definite conclusion as to the position that Agrippa might have hoped for. On the one hand, Augustus ended up not only marrying his daughter to Agrippa but sharing his tribunician power with him. One gold coin from 13 shows Augustus on the obverse or 'head' (as usual) and Agrippa on the reverse or tail' (LACTOR 17: T13); the reverse of another (LACTOR 17: H27) shows Augustus and Agrippa together seated on a tribune's bench. However, rather than indicating Agrippa's position as successor, the coins may be meant to illustrate that Augustus was sharing his power: note his eagerness to make it clear that, on his own initiative, he shared the tribunician power with others throughout his reign, in *Res Gestae* 6.2. Besides, Agrippa's position must be understood above all as reflecting existing political needs. Augustus could not

be everywhere at once, and Agrippa had military skills that Augustus lacked. The two men needed each other for the present; questions of succession, though important, were secondary. Indeed, Agrippa was perhaps, not only in 23 but always, less of a potential successor than an alternative, someone of the same generation who could take Augustus' place if he died (Levick 1976: 29). Augustus' policy seemed in general to work with pairs of brothers or others belonging to the same generation.

There is evidence against the idea that Agrippa was marked out in any straightforward way as Augustus' equal and successor in the fact that Augustus adopted Agrippa and Julia's sons, Gaius Caesar, born in 20, and Lucius, born in 17, as his own; this made the obscurity of Agrippa's family irrelevant. What Agrippa thought of this is not known. Dio associates their adoption with the celebration of the Ludi Saeculares in 17 (54.18); this makes sense, as both events mark the start of a new age. Dio comments (*ibid.*) '[he did] not [wait] for them to become men, but appoint[ed] them then and there successors to his office, in order that fewer plots might be formed against him'. It is a fair point that, if Augustus' enemies thought that there was someone ready to take over Augustus' power straight away, this might discourage plots against his life. However, Dio, as often, seems to be ignoring the difference between the position of the emperors of his own day (the early third century AD) and that of Augustus, who was feeling his way towards the creation of a new kind of monarchy. It is very uncertain to what extent, in 17, Augustus was ready to take the openly monarchical step of appointing an infant child as 'successor to his office', or whether at that time such a step would be more likely to discourage plots against him or encourage them.

In 16, one of Augustus' stepsons, Tiberius, was praetor and the other, Nero Drusus, was quaestor; both were far too young for the positions under the normal rules. Tiberius became consul in 13, at the age of 28. Others in the family were also promoted, and the family was expanding to include the children of old enemies. Iullus Antonius, Antony's son by Fulvia, married Augustus' niece Marcella in 21, after her divorce from Agrippa; he was aedile in 16 and praetor in 13, when he presented games at the Circus Maximus in honour of Augustus' birthday. A poem is addressed to him in Horace's fourth book of *Odes*, published in 13 (4.2). In 10, he was consul, aged thirty-three. The earliest age for holding the consulship was now thirty-six, so Iullus Antonius was being shown a carefully calculated honour: he was being advanced a little ahead of his age, but not so much as Tiberius and Nero Drusus, and much less than would later be the case with Gaius and Lucius.

In 13, Agrippa returned from the East. Augustus' *imperium maius* was renewed for five more years; Agrippa's *tribunicia potestas* was also renewed for five years, and he was also given *imperium maius* (Dio 54.28). Agrippa, however, died the next year. Dio (*ibid.*) tells us that Agrippa had chosen a tomb for himself, but Augustus ignored his wishes and buried him in his own family's Mausoleum. This was a double-edged honour, to say the least, but it

was absolutely essential to bring Gaius and Lucius' natural father into the Julian family, at least after death: there were always people who would make trouble about the succession, and there could be no room for any ambiguity about the boys' origins or loyalties. Augustus distributed 400 sesterces each to the people, saying that Agrippa had requested this. Gaius and Lucius needed looking after, and Augustus needed another right hand man. In 11, Tiberius married Julia after divorcing his wife, Agrippa's daughter Vipsania Agrippina, so she lost both father and husband within a year; she was pregnant with Tiberius' second child at the time of the divorce, but lost the baby. More than one writer states that he had been forced into this marriage:

He was living happily with [Vipsania] Agrippina, and disapproved of Julia's character, having perceived that she had a passion for him even during the lifetime of her former husband, as was in fact the general opinion. But even after the divorce he regretted his separation from Agrippina, and the only time that he chanced to see her, he followed her with such an intent and tearful gaze that care was taken that she should never again come before his eyes. With Julia he lived in harmony at first, and returned her love; but he soon grew cold, and went so far as to cease to live with her at all, after the severing of the tie formed by a child which was born to them, but died at Aquileia in infancy.

(Suetonius, *Tiberius* 7)

We might well wonder how Suetonius knew about all these private actions and feelings.

In 9, Nero Drusus, on campaign in Germany, was consul, but became ill after a horse fell on his leg and died late that year. Nero Drusus seems to have been a favourite of the people, his popularity only helped by the suspicion, sparked by Augustus' haste in marrying Livia when she was still pregnant with him, that he was really Augustus' son rather than the son of Livia's first husband Tiberius Claudius Nero (Suetonius, *Claudius* 1). In later times, we find the belief that he was a Republican: Tacitus (*Annals* 1.33) says, as usual without committing himself, that 'it was believed that if he had obtained control of the Empire he would have restored the free Republic'. Suetonius (*Claudius* 1) writes that 'he made no secret of his intention to restore the traditional constitution', though he dismisses the rumour that, because of this, Augustus tried to recall him from his province and then had him poisoned. Both men were writing in the second century AD. The tradition is partly based on the ancestry of both Nero Drusus and Tiberius. Their maternal grandfather, Marcus Livius Drusus Claudianus, had been born into the family of the Claudii Pulchri, which produced both optimates and radical *populares* such as the tribune Clodius, but had then been adopted into an optimate family (his

adoptive father was Drusus, the murdered tribune of 91), and killed himself after the defeat of Brutus and Cassius at Philippi. Tiberius and Nero Drusus' biological father, Tiberius Claudius Nero, had supported Brutus and Cassius, then Sextus Pompey, then Antony. Suetonius (*Tiberius* 50) claims that Nero Drusus wrote Tiberius a letter urging him to persuade Augustus to restore the Republican constitution, but we do not know what evidence he had for this private communication: he had access to letters to and from the emperors, but not necessarily other correspondence. There is nothing in Nero Drusus' career to suggest that he dreamed of restoring the Republic.

Tiberius, who was with Augustus in Gaul, rushed to Nero Drusus' side. Valerius Maximus (5.5.3) and Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* 7.84) claim that Tiberius' journey of nearly 200 miles was the longest ever covered in a single day; Dio 55.2 tells us that he reached Nero Drusus moments before he died. These stories may be romantic inventions. Nero Drusus' ashes were placed in Augustus' mausoleum; he himself and his two sons were given the name of Germanicus.

Tiberius went back to Germany in 8 to ensure that the Germans did not take advantage of Nero Drusus' death. Augustus now allowed him the title of *imperator*; he was appointed consul for the following year; and he was finally awarded a full Triumph. Augustus himself declined a Triumph for the victories won by Tiberius under his overall command.

Augustus had his *imperium maius* renewed again, for ten years, in 8. In 6, Tiberius was given *tribunicia potestas* for five years; he was now in the same position as Agrippa had been: the emperor's colleague in power and guardian of his heirs. But, instead of exploiting his new powers, Tiberius retired from public life, refusing to take up a command in Armenia to which he had been appointed, going on hunger strike for four days until he was allowed to leave Rome, and moving to the Greek island of Rhodes. Perhaps what Suetonius says about his feelings for Julia is true. However, Suetonius suggests that trouble began early in the marriage, making it hard to explain why it took until 6 for Tiberius to decide that matters had become intolerable.

It may be that Tiberius' relations with Julia's children had more to do with his 'retirement'. Dio comments (55.9) on the public's flattery of the brothers and remarks that Tiberius 'feared their anger'; there may have been a large number of supporters of Gaius and Lucius who mistrusted Tiberius, and aimed to stir up trouble between him and the two boys. Dio's claim that Augustus gave Tiberius the *tribunicia potestas* to annoy Gaius and Lucius and teach them a lesson, because they were not showing enough of a sense of responsibility, is not convincing: Dio may have been influenced by the family of Emperor Septimius Severus in his own day, since Severus had justified worries about the judgement and maturity of his own sons, Geta and Caracalla. Augustus genuinely needed a colleague in power of mature years who knew how to command troops; Gaius, the older brother, was only fourteen. The feelings of the Roman people, however, were a different matter:

they went so far as to vote Gaius a consulship for 5. Dio tells us that Augustus publicly prayed to the gods that no emergency would ever arise again great enough to 'force' a man to be made consul before his twentieth birthday, as he had been.

Tiberius may have found his situation damaging to his pride. Unlike Agrippa, he came from a great noble family, the Claudii (though from a relatively unsuccessful branch of it), and he had already proved himself as a general; why should he not be emperor? The Principate was new, and there was uncertainty about what would happen after Augustus' death. There was no reason to think that it was inevitable that Augustus should be succeeded by a blood relative. Tiberius also had a son of his own, who might become emperor in turn. (In this respect, Suetonius might be right to identify the death of Tiberius and Julia's child as the event that effectively ended their relationship: if Tiberius came to think that he and Julia could not have children, he may have decided that his hopes for the future of his family name lay only with Drusus, his and Vipsania Agrippina's son.) Yet the Roman people seemed to be committed to the rule of the Julian family: they wanted Augustus' blood descendents to be marked out for supreme power, even though they were too young to have achieved anything, while Tiberius was left merely as their guardian. Tiberius may have thought, perhaps rightly, that Julia, and maybe even Augustus himself, were encouraging the people in this: Augustus had already had both boys put on the coinage. Tiberius may have had the sympathy and support of his mother Livia, who had herself been born into the Claudian family (she and Tiberius' father had been distant relatives).

Unlike Agrippa's time on the island of Lesbos, Tiberius' stay in Rhodes was beyond any doubt a retirement from public life. Augustus had lost a man who had been very useful to him – all the more so as finally, from 8, at the age of fifty-five, Augustus settled in Rome and gave up taking personal charge of military campaigns. He is said to have been furious.

In 5, and again in 2, Augustus was consul, a position he had not held since 23; these were the years in which Gaius and Lucius turned fifteen and came of age, and he wanted to use the position to help introduce them to public life. It may have been Augustus standing in the elections held in 6 that gave the People the idea of voting in Gaius to be his consul; it is certain, from Augustus' reaction, that Gaius had not been an official candidate. However, he did not hold office for long: both times he resigned early in the year to let other senators take up the post. The brothers were given the title *principes iuventutis*, leaders of the youth, just as their adoptive father was the leading man in the state. Both brothers were allowed to attend the Senate as soon as they turned fifteen, and a consulship was set aside for them for the years in which they turned twenty (AD 1 for Gaius, AD 4 for Lucius). Augustus comments that all these things were done 'for my honour' (*Res Gestae* 14.1), but he may not have been entirely happy about the swell of public support for the young men as he grew older. Either he had been hypocritical when he

prayed that no-one should be a consul by twenty, or Tiberius' departure and public pressure had forced him to change his mind. Tacitus (*Annals* 1.3.2) is convinced it was hypocrisy: 'he had been shamelessly eager, despite a parade of refusal, for them to be named principes iuventutis and to be designated consuls'. However, it could be argued that Augustus had no choice but to give his grandsons an accelerated training in public life: of his two stepsons in the generation between, Nero Drusus was dead and Tiberius was sulking.

On 12 May 2, Augustus dedicated his new Forum, with the Temple of Mars the Avenger, commemorating both personal family revenge – his defeat of Caesar's assassins – and national revenge – the recovery of the Roman standards from Parthia (which were placed in the inner shrine of the temple: *Res Gestae* 29.2). The title *pater patriae*, 'Father of the Country', given to him three months earlier, was engraved on the base of a golden statue. Augustus had secured for Gaius and Lucius the right to officiate at all dedications of buildings, a right normally reserved for ex-consuls. On this occasion, they supervised the horse races. Their brother, Agrippa Postumus, born as his name suggests after Agrippa's death, took part in the riding exercise known as the 'Troy Game'; he was ten years old.

Altogether, it was a time of great satisfaction for Augustus. It seemed as though he could look forward to an orderly transfer of power to Gaius, perhaps even a gradual laying down of burdens as, at the age of sixty, he entered what, for most men, would have been the years of retirement and calm.

Note

1 Censorinus' two sets of dates, the historians' and those of the College of Fifteen, are given in handy table format in LACTOR 17: 268.

15

FATHER OF THE FATHERLAND, 2–
AD 14

‘How sharper than a serpent’s tooth’: the Julias versus the Julian laws

During 2, Augustus’ daughter Julia was involved in a scandal. Seneca the Younger (*On Benefits* 6.32) says that she ‘had made herself available to armies of adulterers ... [and] had wandered the streets of the city in nocturnal orgies’ some of which had taken place in the Forum. Velleius (2.100) called her ‘degraded’, knowing that the more thoroughly he condemned Julia’s behaviour the less likely anyone would be to find fault with Tiberius for abandoning her when he left Rome. Roman men found an extra element of scandal in what they thought of as Julia’s advanced years: at thirty-eight she was ‘on the threshold of old age’ (Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 2.5.2). (For Romans, the fortieth birthday marked the start of ‘old age’: men were ‘young men’, *iuvenes*, up to the age of forty and ‘old men’, *senes*, after that – men, that is, considered too old to fight as front-line soldiers. The Romans did not have the concepts of ‘teenage’ or ‘middle age’, stages of life that now take up practically people’s whole existence.) Iullus Antonius had committed adultery with her and died, along with other important men (by ‘his own hand’, according to Velleius 2.100); others were banished to islands. Velleius (*ibid.*) names Titus Quintus Crispinus, Cornelius Scipio (the grandson of Julia’s mother, Augustus’ ex-wife Scribonia), Appius Claudius Pulcher and Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus among those who were punished. Julia herself was banished to the island of Pandateria, off the coast of Campania. Her mother, Scribonia, went with her into exile, voluntarily, or so we are told.

Augustus spoke in public about the scandal. For a Roman man who was a *paterfamilias* (the head of a family) to make public a child’s immoral behaviour was extraordinary. Seneca the Younger (*On Benefits* 6.32) tells us that Augustus ‘could not contain his anger’, and was later ashamed of having failed to keep her scandalous behaviour secret. He declared that he would rather have been the father of Phoebe, a freedwoman of Julia’s who had been involved in the scandal but had committed suicide rather than wait to be punished; to the Roman way of thinking, this showed a greater sense of pride and dignity and a proper sense of shame. Julia was treated with extreme severity, according to Suetonius (*Augustus* 65): ‘he denied her the use of wine and every form of luxury, and would not allow any man, [slave] or free, to come near her without his permission, and then not without being informed of his stature, complexion, and even of any marks or scars upon his body’.

The whole episode is extremely puzzling, and it is likely that there is more to the behaviour of all those involved than meets the eye. It is difficult not to react to Seneca’s violent attack on Julia by questioning his claims and feeling some sympathy for her. Setting aside the especially shocking accusations of public sex and prostitution, for which there is no other independent evidence,

Julia was 'guilty' of having sex with a number of lovers – no different from Julius Caesar, and Caesar never had the excuse that his wife had abandoned him to go off to another country. For her whole life, Julia's body had been placed at the service of her father's and others' political ambitions; is it right to condemn her for taking control of the choice of who she slept with?

There is certainly some justification for such a response, although we must be careful about putting the highly privileged Julia, the product of a society radically different from our own, into the role of a modern feminist martyr. It is also important not to become so fixated on the issues of personal morality and sexuality that the politics are ignored. Augustus in fact accused the men involved not simply of adultery, but of treason. Pliny the Elder, admittedly in the middle of a highly exaggerated account of Augustus' troubles (*Natural History* 7.149), claims that Julia had plotted to kill Augustus. Contrary to what Seneca writes, it may be that Augustus' response was not the result of lack of self-control. He may have deliberately made public allegations of sexual misbehaviour, embarrassing as they were to him, given his laws and speeches about marriage and sex, in order to shame Julia and the men involved and conceal a dangerous truth: that this was a serious political rebellion at the heart of the ruling class, involving the royal family itself.

Julia had lost almost all power and influence within the family. Augustus had adopted her sons as his own, with the result that she could not look forward to the role of 'Queen Mother' in the next reign: that would belong to Livia, if Livia outlived Augustus. She had twice been given what might be described as the status of 'Second Lady' in Rome, when her husbands, first Agrippa and then Tiberius, had been awarded tribunician power alongside Augustus. But, now that Tiberius had run off to Rhodes, his tribunician power, and her status as his wife, existed in name only. Perhaps the fact that her mother Sempronia went into exile with her is a hint that Julia had turned to Sempronia, someone else who, in spite of her close blood ties with Augustus' heirs, had been 'written out' of the royal family, and plotted with her a way to regain power. It is uncertain how important the sexual element really was in this scandal, but, even if all the men involved were, as alleged, Julia's lovers, that may simply indicate that Julia was using sex as a political weapon, as Caesar had famously done, and as Augustus himself was believed to do (Suetonius, *Augustus* 69).

The names of the men who were caught up in the scandal seem highly significant. Iullus Antonius, like Julia, was a member of the royal family who may have felt himself marginalised, and dreamed of a more important position in the state. Appius Claudius Pulcher, Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus and Cornelius Scipio were all from ancient and very prominent noble families; if there really was a conspiracy, it may represent an attempt by the nobility to undermine the new regime, this time from the inside. The first two names suggest another possibility. While we cannot always assume that a family name is a reliable indicator of each family member's political views, it is

interesting that these two men belonged to the two greatest *popularis* families of the late Republic: the family of the tribune Clodius, and the family of the reforming brothers Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus. Augustus was allowing no other individual the right to look after the people's interests: only he could be the saviour and the guardian of the people. It may be that the old *popularis* families resented this even more than the old *optimates* families resented the general loss of the Senate's power.

A final mystery is the role of Tiberius in the aftermath of the scandal. Tiberius wrote letters from Rhodes urging Augustus to forgive Julia. Suetonius (*Tiberius* 11) implies that he did this for appearance's sake, simply to avoid accusations that he took pleasure in Julia's fall or was eager to profit from it. But there may be more to it than that. While it is pushing scepticism about our evidence too far to doubt that Tiberius and Julia had had a bitter split, Tiberius may have had some political, if not personal, sympathy with Julia. He seems to have felt, as Julia may also by now have done, that he was being exploited by Augustus to serve the interests of Gaius and Lucius, and sidelined. He may have shared with men like Iullus Antonius, Gracchus and Pulcher who, like himself, came from ancient noble families, resentment that nobles, however talented, were being overlooked in favour of Gaius and Lucius, young men who had not proved themselves in politics or in battle and whose only qualification for the throne was being descended from Augustus. It should be noted that the discovery of the scandal did nothing to improve Tiberius' position. If the scandal really had been simply about sexual behaviour, Tiberius might have been allowed to come back, with Augustus acknowledging that the evidence of Julia's promiscuity now made it look very likely that the breakdown of her and Tiberius' marriage, and so, it could be argued, Tiberius' escape to Rhodes, had been Julia's fault. But, if anything, after the scandal Tiberius was more out of favour with Augustus than ever. When his tribunician power and *imperium* expired in 1, he asked to return to Rome, but Augustus turned him down and told him 'to give up all thought of his kindred, whom he had so eagerly abandoned' (*ibid.*). He spent the years after 1 in an awkward and dangerous position, without any official status. He seems to have 'gone native', behaving like a Greek aristocrat, visiting the gymnasium and studying philosophy (*ibid.*) and becoming a racehorse owner: a four-horse chariot team owned by him won a race in the Olympic Games of AD 1 (LACTOR 17: J39).

Julia's disgrace had, apparently, no effect on Gaius and Lucius, who remained, legally, Augustus' sons. In 1 Gaius, now nineteen years old, was sent to command troops on the Danube, although most of the actual fighting was overseen by other generals. In the same year the Armenians rose in revolt against Rome. As noted above, as part of the settlement agreed between the Roman and Parthian empires in 20, Rome had won the right to appoint the kings of Armenia, a country on the border of both empires. But now the Armenians had driven out the recently appointed King Artavasdes III. Gaius

was brought into adulthood in a rush: he was married to his thirteen-year-old second cousin Livilla, daughter of Nero Drusus, given a council of advisers, and sent to the East with proconsular powers. Tiberius, still in exile in Rhodes, went to meet Gaius on his journey. Velleius writes (2.101) that Tiberius 'accorded [Gaius] all the respect due to a superior': this remark is pointed, since Gaius had taken over the *maius imperium* that Tiberius had, until then, technically continued to have in the East. According to Dio (55.10), Tiberius even threw himself at Gaius' feet. Gaius, according to Suetonius (*Tiberius* 12), gave him a chilly welcome, allegedly because of lies about Tiberius spread by Gaius' adviser Marcus Lollius. Gaius spent AD 1 in Syria, although he held the title of consul in Rome for the year. During this year, the Parthian king Phraataces came to terms with the Romans. The Romans placed Armenia in the hands of Ariobarzanes, who had been installed by Augustus as the king of neighbouring Media Atropatene in 20.

Augustus' hopes for his family received a blow when Gaius' younger brother Lucius died of a sudden illness in Massilia in AD 2. He was eighteen years old, and had not lived to take up the consulship that had been reserved for him for AD 4. Offerings to his spirit were made every year on 20 August, the anniversary of his death.

In this same year, Tiberius at last returned to Rome. According to Suetonius (*Tiberius* 13), Augustus had given Gaius the power to decide whether Tiberius was allowed to return. As he had fallen out with his adviser Lollius, Tiberius' enemy, and so was feeling better disposed to Tiberius, Gaius said yes, on condition that Tiberius took no part in politics. The coincidence of Lucius' death and Tiberius' return gave rise to the suspicion that Livia, Augustus' wife but also Tiberius' mother, was responsible for the death of Lucius (Dio 55.10a; Tacitus, *Annals* 1.3). However, given that the actual heir apparent, Gaius, was still alive, it seems odd that Livia should have killed the younger brother, unless it was a piece of exceptional cunning, part of a thorough and long-term plan. (Dio and Tacitus do also report the rumour that Livia was responsible for Gaius' death a few years later.) But it is always important to remember how common it was for people to die at an early age in the ancient world.

The Armenians were continuing to put up a fight. Gaius fought against them, capturing the fort of Artagira, and both Gaius and Augustus were proclaimed *imperator*. But Gaius had received a serious wound at Artagira on 9 September AD 3, and started to fall sick. Dio (55.10a) states that Gaius 'was not robust to begin with' and that this general physical weakness 'had impaired his mind, [and] this illness blunted his faculties still more'. This seems to come from Velleius, who writes (2.102) that after being wounded Gaius 'became somewhat incapacitated mentally as well as physically'. It is not hard to believe that Augustus' biological grandson might have inherited his weak resistance to physical disease; perhaps this really did affect his mind, or perhaps we should suspect that propaganda in support of Tiberius is behind

these statements. On his way back to Italy in AD 4, on 21 February, Gaius died at the age of twenty-three. As with his brother, every year afterwards, offerings were made to his spirit on that day.

Perhaps feeling especially sympathetic towards Julia for having lost two of her sons in rapid succession, the Roman people tried to persuade Augustus to bring back his daughter from exile. He refused, saying that he wished on them daughters and wives like Julia; he would not bring her back until fire mixed with water: so people took lighted torches and threw them into the River Tiber. He was persuaded to let her leave the island of Pandateria and move to Rhegium (Reggio), on the mainland of Italy, though only just: it is right on the 'toe'.

Augustus had his powers renewed for a further ten-year period in this year. In a dramatic turnaround in Tiberius' fortunes, he was not only given the tribunician power for ten years alongside Augustus but was adopted by Augustus as his son, at the age of forty-five. Augustus declared publicly, 'I make this adoption for the sake of Rome' (Velleius 2.104), but it is impossible to say whether this came across as a tribute to Tiberius' abilities and services to Rome or as an obvious indication that Augustus was reluctant and unenthusiastic. The day on which the adoption happened, 26 June, became a public holiday. Augustus also adopted his one surviving grandson, Agrippa Postumus. Tiberius adopted his nephew Germanicus, who was now twenty. Some writers (including Dio: 55, 13) believe that Augustus made him do this and have seen it as a sign of Augustus' continuing distrust of Tiberius, who had a son of his own, called Drusus, but this is not necessarily the case. Germanicus had lost his father and was at an age when he still needed a *paterfamilias* to look after his interests; with his adoption into the Julian family Tiberius ceased to be the *paterfamilias* of his own branch of the Claudian family. Tacitus' interpretation (*Annals* 1.3) is that Augustus needed to 'increase the number of safeguards he could rely on': by now he had learned painfully, if he had not already realised it before, that careful provision was needed to ensure that, in the event of deaths within the royal family, there were clearly designated heirs.

In fact, if anyone among Augustus' relatives had reason to be worried by Germanicus' adoption, it was perhaps Agrippa Postumus, who was a similar age to Germanicus and Drusus and so found himself potentially overshadowed by two other members of the royal family within his own generation. Although he had been adopted by Augustus, he was not accorded any of the privileges that had been given to Gaius and Lucius, and Augustus did not take the consulship again in AD 5 in order to introduce him to public life at his coming of age, as he had with his brothers. He 'spent most of his time fishing' and 'used to give way to violent anger' (Dio 55.32); he is said to have resented the fact that, by adopting him, Augustus had taken for himself Agrippa's enormous fortune, which would otherwise have gone to him as Agrippa's only surviving son. It was also said that he 'spoke ill of Livia as a

stepmother'. It would have been only natural for him to resent the treatment of his biological mother Julia and take his resentment out on Livia, and that certainly may help to explain why he was out of favour. In AD 6, his adoption was cancelled; he was expelled from the royal family completely and sent to Surrentum (Sorrento), many miles south of Rome. In AD 7, when he was eighteen, he was disinherited and his money given to the military treasury, which will have been short of funds at that difficult time. He was exiled by decree of the Senate to the tiny island of Planasia, near Corsica, just south of Elba.

This was extraordinary treatment of a close relative of Augustus who, as Tacitus points out (*Annals* 1.3.4), had 'been found guilty of no crime'. It is impossible to tell whether Agrippa Postumus was really so different from his brothers; perhaps it is simply that Tiberius, on whom Augustus increasingly had to rely and who by now, as will be seen, appeared to be Rome's only consistently successful general, was at this time in a position of such power that he could insist that Augustus' biological grandson, his obvious competitor for the throne, was taken out of the way. However, Postumus may in fact have been guilty of a conspiracy against Augustus which was hushed up to save the regime embarrassment. Levick (1976: 58–9) argues that Postumus was behind the political agitation of Publius Rufus in AD 6, reported in Dio (55.27), who makes it clear that Publius Rufus was only the front man and that other more important people were behind it. She believes that Postumus was acting together with Lucius Aemilius Paullus (see below); this theory may have some support from Suetonius (*Augustus* 19), if Dio's 'Publius Rufus' is the same as Suetonius' otherwise unknown 'Plautius Rufus', who Suetonius says was involved in a conspiracy together with Paullus. Suetonius (*Augustus* 51) mentions among examples of Augustus' *clementia* his imposing on a plebeian called Junius Novatus only a fine when he 'circulated a most scathing letter about him under the name of the young Agrippa'. The lenient treatment of Novatus is easily explained if the libel really was written by Agrippa Postumus and Novatus was just a 'fall guy' who was made to take the blame to spare Augustus and Tiberius embarrassment. Perhaps Augustus even secretly paid the fine himself. It would be interesting to know how well and how long Novatus lived after this bit of bother.

Any hopes that one of Augustus' biological descendants would one day sit on the throne now rested on the next generation. Augustus and Livia had had no children except for a prematurely born baby that died (Suetonius, *Augustus* 63); two of his grandsons were now dead and one was disgraced. The attempt to produce grandchildren who would be descendants of both himself and Livia by marrying Tiberius to Julia had proved a disaster. Augustus' grandson Gaius had married Livia's granddaughter Livilla, but he died before they had any children. However, Augustus' granddaughter Agrippina was married to Livia's grandson Germanicus in AD 5; their oldest son, Nero Caesar, was

born in AD 6, the year of Agrippa Postumus' expulsion from the family. The couple went on to have five children, of whom one, Gaius Caligula, did eventually become emperor, though he did not live up to the great hopes that people placed in him.

In AD 8, Julia's daughter Julia the Younger became caught up in scandal. This Julia was found to have inherited her mother's promiscuity, and to have had an affair with Decimus Junius Silanus and perhaps others. Various men were punished, including Silanus, who was sent into exile. The episode is, if anything, even more obscure than the disgrace of Julia the Elder but, again, the political and social prominence of the men involved suggests that there was more political than sexual misbehaviour, especially as one of the condemned men was Julia's husband, Lucius Aemilius Paullus. (Some historians believe that Paullus was condemned for treason earlier than Silanus' disgrace in AD 8, but this would not alter the fact that Julia's husband had managed to get into just as much trouble as her alleged lovers.) Paullus was the grandson of Scribonia and the son of Paullus Aemilius Lepidus (consul in 34, and one of the ineffective censors of 22); in 4, he had married Julia, his second cousin, who was then fifteen years old; and in AD 1 he had enjoyed the great honour of being consul alongside Gaius. Julia the Younger was banished to a small, barren island called Trimerus, off the south-east coast of Italy where, according to Suetonius (*Augustus* 65), she gave birth to a child that Augustus refused to acknowledge or 'allow to be reared' (the Latin word is *ali*: this may mean that he refused to allow it to be brought up in the manner of a Roman aristocrat, or even that he ordered that it should be starved to death). Livia is said (Tacitus, *Annals* 4.71) to have offered Julia the Younger support in her exile. This might have been motivated by kindness, or by a concern for public relations, since Julia the Younger's fall was certainly suspiciously convenient for Livia's own son and grandsons.

The red Danube and Hermann the German

In AD 5, there were changes to the conditions of service for soldiers. Apparently concerned that soldiers were not volunteering to re-enlist after their official discharge, Augustus increased the length of service for soldiers of the Praetorian Guard from twelve to sixteen years, and for other soldiers from sixteen to twenty, with five more years in the reserves. In exchange, generous terms were announced for soldiers when they did retire: the money given was raised to 20,000 sesterces for soldiers of the Praetorian Guard and 12,000 (over thirteen years' pay) for other soldiers. To pay for this, a tax of 5 per cent on inheritances was introduced. The money raised went into a new military treasury, the *aerarium militare*, and was used to provide funds for soldiers' retirement. This tax had to be paid by all (contrary to Dio 55.25; the poor were not made exempt from the tax until Trajan's reign at the beginning of the second century AD). In the following year, Augustus made a personal contribution to the new treasury of 170 million sesterces (*Res Gestae* 17.2).

The increase in the length of service for soldiers reflected the military difficulties that the Romans were facing at this time, including an outbreak of piracy that for a while required Sardinia to be put under emergency military rule. This must have been humiliating to Augustus, for whom the defeat of Sextus Pompey and his 'pirate' fleet in 36 had been the turning point that set him on the path to supreme power. An exception to the generally gloomy picture was the successful campaigning of Tiberius in Germany: between AD 4 and 6 he first advanced from the Rhine to the Elbe in the East, matching the achievements of Nero Drusus, then moved south to Bohemia, the modern Czech Republic.

However, he was forced to break off his campaign by the outbreak of a serious revolt in Illyricum, the area between the Danube and the Adriatic Sea. Velleius (2.110), perhaps exaggerating to emphasise the danger that Tiberius now faced, states that 800,000 people were in the tribes that rose in revolt, and there were 200,000 infantry fighters among them. Roman merchants and veterans were killed, and the Adriatic coast of Italy was raided. One of Augustus' great achievements had been to turn the Roman army into a professional force made up of volunteers, but now, in AD 6, levies (bodies of conscripted troops) were raised; veterans were brought back into service; citizens had to provide their freedmen as soldiers, the number of freedmen determined by the citizen's property class. (Freedmen continued to be clients of their former masters and mistresses, and still owed them certain obligations.) When Germanicus was sent out in the following year to bring reinforcements, not only did his force also include freedmen, but some of these were not even freedmen when they were recruited; they were slaves of rich Romans who were forced to free them and send them straight off to war, and to supply them with six months' rations at their own expense.

Tiberius found it hard to attack the enemy in their mountain strongholds and settled in to a strategy of cutting off supplies by blocking the land route to Italy. Dio (55.31) alleges that Augustus suspected Tiberius of wasting time in order to continue to enjoy the prestige of military command. But the letters from Augustus to Tiberius, which Suetonius quotes (*Tiberius* 21), do not suggest any quarrel: for example, 'I have only praise for the conduct of your summer campaigns, dear Tiberius, and I am sure that no one could have acted with better judgment than you did amid so many difficulties.' Elsewhere (*Augustus* 25) Suetonius states that Augustus constantly quoted the Greek proverb 'Better a safe commander than a bold'. The *plebs*, however, who were at this time suffering from plague and food shortages, and who were not well informed about military affairs and geography, may have wondered why Tiberius could not achieve quick successes as he had done when fighting the Germans. The financial strains of the war are demonstrated by the facts that Augustus had to impose a two per cent tax on the sale of slaves in order to maintain the new force of night-watchmen, the *vigiles*, and that the money that had been allocated to the praetors to spend on gladiatorial games was taken for general government expenses. By AD 8, Tiberius' strategy had begun to have an effect: the enemy were starving and falling ill. The Pannonians in the north of Illyricum came to terms with the Romans. The following year, Tiberius captured a fortress near Salonae (Split) and the Dalmatians of southern Illyricum surrendered.

Suetonius (*Tiberius* 16) compares the war in Illyricum with the struggle against Hannibal in the third century, judging that this had been 'the most serious of all foreign wars since those with Carthage'. The victory brought relief rather than celebration: the war had interfered with food supplies, involved a large number of legions, and produced very little booty. Even the relief, however, was short-lived, because within five days of the end of this war (Velleius 2.117) news arrived of a great disaster in Germany.

Parts of Germany were becoming strongly influenced by Rome: markets were being held and cities built. These developments, along with a vigorous attention to Roman taxation, were strongly encouraged by Quinctilius Varus when he arrived as governor in Germany in AD 7. Varus was later attacked for the way he had governed the province: Velleius (2.117) says that he 'wasted the summer campaigning season giving judgements and pursuing the niceties of judicial procedure'; but he was surely following a policy of Romanisation that had been decided upon by the Emperor and Senate.

Varus, like Sulla and Caesar, came from an old patrician family that had fallen into obscurity. He himself, however, had a very successful career. He was consul together with Tiberius in 13; at that time he was, like Tiberius, married to a daughter of Agrippa. He later became even closer to the royal family by marrying Claudia Pulchra, Augustus' grand-niece. He held the important governorships of Africa (7–6) and Syria (from 6). Velleius' suggestion (*ibid.*) that he was guilty of corruption in Syria probably just

reflects the attacks on Varus' memory after the disaster.

In AD 9, while he was between the Rhine and the Elbe, an uprising broke out on the other side of the Teutoberg Forest. It was difficult terrain – the forest was dense and surrounded by marshes – but the local German chiefs, allies of the Romans, helped them to make their way through. Their leader was a prince who was called by the Romans Arminius, but whose given name is likely to have been closer to the modern German name Hermann. 'Arminius' had received Roman citizenship and even ranked as an equestrian. Once the Roman legions were in the middle of the forest, the Germans, having already slaughtered the Roman garrisons stationed throughout the country, encircled the army and attacked it. The legions were cut to pieces; Varus and the senior officers committed suicide. All but one of the Roman forts were captured.

The Romans quickly placed a garrison on the Rhine and Tiberius, who had only recently returned from Dalmatia, went to Germany with a large army. Three legions had been lost. This was a national catastrophe. No men of military age were willing to be conscripted. Augustus punished his own citizens: lots were drawn among civilians, and every fifth man under thirty-five lost his property and civil rights. When even these penalties did not persuade enough men to sign up for the army, Augustus had some killed. He made freedmen and those who had completed their military service draw lots, and sent the soldiers who had been raised in this way to join Tiberius. Gauls and Germans living in Rome were ordered to leave, and even those serving in the Praetorian Guard were sent off to various islands. Augustus kept on all the current governors of the provinces throughout the Empire, to ensure that men of experience were in place and to avoid the opportunity that hand-overs from one governor to another could give for provincials to rise in revolt. According to Suetonius (*Augustus* 23), he did not cut his hair or beard for months, a Roman sign of mourning, and would repeatedly bang his head on a door, shouting 'Quinctilius Varus, give me back my legions!' No festivals were celebrated, until news came that Tiberius, taking the same cautious approach as he had done in Illyricum, was holding his strong position by the Rhine and firmly preventing the Germans from crossing the river into Roman territory.

The stepson also rises

In the last decade of Augustus' reign, it became increasingly clear that long-term supporters of Tiberius were doing well in their careers. In AD 7, for example, Lucilius Longus, a friend of Tiberius and the only senator who had followed him into exile in Rhodes, became suffect consul. Tiberius was now consistently proclaimed *imperator* for victories won in the imperial provinces, along with Augustus himself. His nephew and adopted son Germanicus received triumphal honours in AD 9 after the campaign in Illyricum. In AD 12 Germanicus became consul, at the age of twenty-seven or twenty-eight, without ever having been praetor. He held office for the whole year, which was already becoming relatively rare.

Tiberius was successful in his campaigning in Germany from AD 9 to 12. He crossed the Rhine, taking the war to the Germans, though with no intention of occupying territory East of the river. He lost no Roman troops in the first year, according to Velleius (2.120). On 23 October AD 12, he celebrated a delayed triple triumph for his victories in Illyricum.

In AD 13, Augustus had his powers renewed for another ten years. Tiberius was given tribunician power again, and equal *imperium* with Augustus across the whole Empire. Drusus was given permission to stand for the consulship two years later, when he would be twenty-eight, although he had not held the praetorship; he was, therefore, being given exactly the same privileges as Germanicus. His continuing importance within the royal family is also shown by his marriage to Livilla, who was his own cousin, Germanicus' sister, and the widow of the previous heir apparent, Gaius.

As Augustus, who was increasingly frail (Dio 55.33–4, 56.26), now rarely visited the Senate House, he asked for a larger *consilium*: twenty advisers instead of fifteen, who would serve for a year instead of six months. A law was passed to the effect that all decisions made by Augustus in consultation with Tiberius, other members of the royal family, this new *consilium*, the serving consuls and the consuls designated for the following year should be treated as decisions of the whole Senate. Dio (56.28) comments: 'Having gained by this decree these privileges, which in reality he had possessed in any case, he continued to transact most of the public business, though he sometimes reclined while doing so'. He had not lost his political touch. In AD 13, recognising that the five per cent inheritance tax introduced to fund the Military Treasury was still causing discontent, he ordered the Senate to investigate alternative sources of revenue. When the Senate came up with the idea of taxing property instead, Augustus sent out tax assessors all over the country, creating such protest that the Senate was forced to ratify the original inheritance tax – which, according to Dio (*ibid.*), had been Augustus' purpose all along.

The consuls for AD 14 were Sextus Pompeius and Sextus Appuleius, both

relatives of Augustus. Augustus and Tiberius conducted a census; then, in August, Tiberius set out again for Dalmatia. On 19 August, Augustus died at Nola in Campania.¹ He is said to have summoned those around him and stated 'I found Rome built of clay; I leave it to you in marble'. Suetonius (*Augustus* 28) takes this statement literally, as a reference to his building programme in Rome. Dio (56.30) takes it metaphorically, as a reference to the difference between the fragile, crumbling political system that he inherited and the solid, stable political system that he had created and was now leaving behind him. He then asked for applause, as comic actors got at the end of a mime (Dio 56.30; Suetonius, *Augustus* 99). There were rumours, reported in Dio 56.30 and Tacitus, *Annals* 1.5, that Augustus had secretly sailed over to Planasia just a few months before his death and become reconciled to Agrippa Postumus, and that, as a result, Livia had poisoned him. These rumours are not believable; they contradict Dio and Tacitus' own assertions that Augustus was already very weak by that time: he would have been in no condition to take a sea voyage.

Tiberius was called back from Dalmatia. Dio (56.31) states that 'the more trustworthy' writers tell us that Augustus was dead before Tiberius arrived. His judgement is surely correct. Velleius (2.123) claims that Tiberius arrived in time to see him alive, and that only then did Augustus become less anxious and die in peace. This seems very much like propaganda, and later claims, for example in Suetonius *Augustus* 98, that Augustus and Tiberius had time for detailed discussions very probably reflect attempts to put various policies of Tiberius beyond debate by claiming that they formed part of the divine Augustus' deathbed instructions. However, as Tacitus hints in *Annals* 1.5, the announcement of Augustus' death was delayed until Tiberius was at Nola and able to take charge of the situation. There was no power vacuum: Tiberius had tribunician power, *maius imperium* in the provinces, power equal to the consuls in Rome.

Augustus' will began: 'Since a cruel fate has bereft me of my sons Gaius and Lucius, be Tiberius Caesar heir to two-thirds of my estate.' This has been interpreted, for example by Suetonius in *Tiberius* 23, as showing that Augustus to the end of his life regarded the adoption of Tiberius as a desperate last resort; but it could also be explained as Augustus deliberately distracting attention from the fact that there were a number of other, surviving, blood relatives that he had decided not to make his heirs. The rest of Augustus' estate went to Livia; he asked the Senate to make a special allowance for her, since it was more than the amount that women could receive in inheritance even after he himself had introduced less restrictive legislation. He left 43.5 million sesterces to the people (enough for each member of the *plebs* to receive about 200 sesterces), 1,000 sesterces to each of the Praetorian Guards, 500 to each member of the urban cohorts and 300 to each of the legionnaires; he had kept aside enough money for the payments to be made in cash. He laid it down that neither of the Julias should be brought

back from exile or buried in the Mausoleum with him and the rest of the family. Among a number of pieces of advice left in writing to Tiberius and the People, he urged Romans not to try to expand the Empire further, in case they risked losing what they already had.

Agrippa Postumus was killed very soon after Augustus' death. Tacitus famously blames Tiberius ('the first act of the new principate was the murder of Agrippa Postumus', *Annals* 1.6), but it is not impossible that the death came on Augustus' own instructions, to ensure that an obvious source of rebellion was removed, making it easier for Tiberius to enjoy a successful reign. Augustus was quite capable of turning on his own relations, although it is true that, as Tacitus states (*ibid.*), Augustus had never actually 'steered himself to have any of his relatives killed', unless you count Caesarion, who was not closely related to him by blood; it is unlikely that old age had taken away his capacity for extraordinary ruthlessness, especially if he thought there was a danger to the political settlement that he had devoted his life to creating and maintaining. When the news arrived in Rome, Tiberius reacted angrily in public and threatened to have Postumus' guard, who had carried out the killing, punished, but the punishment never happened.

The Senate decreed on 17 September that Augustus was immortal and should be worshipped as divine. Livia, who had already been adopted by Augustus' will into the Julian family as Julia Augusta, was made a priestess of Augustus. A senator called Numerius Atticus testified on oath that he had seen with his own eyes Augustus ascending into heaven. Livia gave him a million sesterces.

Note

¹ As Dio (56.30) and Suetonius (*Augustus* 100) correctly say, he was seventy-five years old, not (as Velleius says in 2.123) seventy-six. He was born on 23 September 63. Therefore he was sixty on 23 September 3, sixty-two on 23 September 1, sixty-three on 23 September AD 1 and seventy-five twelve years after that, on 23 September AD 13. Since he died on 19 August AD 14, he did not reach his next birthday. The age of seventy-seven given by some modern writers is clearly wrong – the number has been reached simply by adding sixty-three and fourteen. This should caution us against assuming that ancient writers are always more casual and careless over facts than we are today. The *Res Gestae* (35.2) ends with the sentence ‘When I wrote this, I was in my seventy-sixth year’ which, of course, means that he was seventy-five years old.

16
SOCIETY

The economy

Most farmers in Italy were engaged in subsistence farming, with a variety of crops grown and animals herded at a local level. Excavations of colonies have revealed that the plots of land farmed were usually very small. Unless farmers owned more than one plot each – for which we would have to have proof that the numbers of plots exceeded the likely numbers of settlers – the farms could not by themselves have supported a family and farmers will also have had to make use of common pasture land.

Other than the banks of the Nile in Egypt, Italy was the most densely populated region of the Mediterranean. Throughout our period, there were crises of food supply (not always famines, although the prolonged shortages when Sextus Pompey was blockading Italy did produce real starvation). Naturally, the problem was most acute in Rome itself, with its more than one million residents, few of whom grew any food. There was enormous profit to be made from importing food to Italy, and especially Rome, but also huge risk. (A great deal of our knowledge of the ancient Mediterranean comes from the large number of wrecked ships that have been discovered.)

All our literary sources agree that there was a decline in the late Republic in the number of free peasants. There was a growth in the number of large estates (villas and *latifundia*), and it was not uncommon for one man to own many estates. In Cicero's speech *Pro Roscio Amerino* of 80, we are told that Q. Roscius of Ameria had thirteen estates along the River Tiber, worth 6 million sesterces in total. In 49, the elder Ahenobarbus could promise plots of land between 4 and 10 hectares to several thousand of his soldiers from his own property, and use his tenants, freedmen and slave herdsmen as sailors for a whole fleet (Nicolet 1994: 618). Much of the property in the possession of the great Roman and Italian landowners was in the provinces.

Booty from conquest and exploitation of the conquered created the fortunes that enabled men to buy these estates. On the other side of the equation, peasants were recruited into the army, taking them away from the land, and often could not compete with the large landowners and were forced to sell. However, there was not a simple exchange of the labour of peasant landowners for that of slaves, although unquestionably the use of slave labour increased with the growth of the *latifundia*. There were also tenant farmers and sharecroppers (people running a plot of land as a joint business venture).

There was growing urbanisation from the start of this period; by the time of Augustus, perhaps 3 million out of the 7.5 million people in Italy lived in towns. There was tremendous growth in construction work. Houses were often badly constructed and cheap, but the small profit to be made from each house was balanced by the fact that there were always many opportunities to build new houses, partly because of the growth of cities and partly because houses so often fell or burned down. There was also a demand for luxury

houses from increasingly rich senators or the new rich, and for large public buildings.

Although the Roman silver *denarius* spread all over the Mediterranean, there was a shortage of cash. A positive effect was that there was no great inflation during the first century BC, but the negative effects were huge. There were financial crises in which the circulation of money and the availability of credit threatened to break down completely, in 66–63 and 48–47; there were repeated crises in the public finances due to widespread or unsuccessful warfare (Nicolet 1994: 600).

Debt was a universal problem. It caused trouble for the small landowners in the country. In the cities it affected the poor, who could not afford the rents on their flats or their workshops, the small businessmen, and the great landowners who borrowed in order to buy luxury houses and goods. Sometimes the problems were suffered by the creditors, who could be far less wealthy than the debtors. In 85 and 66 a number of big lenders went bust; the same could have happened in 63.

In the late 20s, one of the most important reforms of Augustus' reign took place, his reorganisation of the coinage. With few exceptions, all coins in the late Republic were silver. This had meant that only high-value goods were paid for in cash. Augustus established a coinage using four metals: gold, silver, brass (copper and zinc) and copper. For the first time in decades, small change was in circulation. The *sestertius* (symbol HS) had always been the basic accounting unit; now the brass *sestertius* coin, worth a quarter of a *denarius*, became the basic unit of currency. There was a range of coins fixed in value in relationship to each other, from the gold *aureus* worth 100 HS to the tiny copper *quadrans* worth one-sixteenth of a HS (for further details, see LACTOR 17: 12–15).

The importance of this reform cannot be overstated. It allowed a true money economy to operate throughout the Empire. By making the movement of wealth easy, it enabled merchants to get wealthier and provincials to share in the benefits of being part of the Roman economy. It made it easier to supply the people of Rome with what they needed. It made it significantly easier to provision, pay and give pensions to the Roman army; it is probably not too much to say that without an effective system of coinage the Roman army, scattered over the frontiers of the Empire and in constant need of huge quantities of food, drink and weapons, could not have continued to function. Money does many things, some to the benefit of all people in society, but above all it is a mechanism by which the economically unproductive can exploit the economically productive.

The ring of the lords: senators

The position of senators within Roman society and the actions of the senators in the late Republic have been covered in the Introduction and in detail in the first ten chapters. This section summarises some of the changes under Augustus.

Until 18, the property qualification for senators was set at just 400,000 sesterces, the same as for *equites*, ‘because many of them had been stripped of their ancestral estates by the wars, and then, as time went on and men acquired wealth, it had been raised to one million sesterces’ (Dio 54.26). Dio’s comment about the low property qualification being a result of civil war appears to be a misunderstanding of the fact that there was no separate property class for senators until the reign of Augustus: senators were born into the equestrian class and became senators on being elected to a magistracy. This was exploited by Pompey, the son of a senator (in fact a consular), when he appeared in the equestrians’ parade on his return from Spain in the late 70s, still not having served as a magistrate and therefore not technically a member of the Senate. (He made a stir by observing that he had served under ‘his own command’.) After 18, membership of the senatorial class was hereditary, a development that Augustus encouraged by allowing the sons of senators to attend meetings of the Senate as soon as they came of age (Suetonius, *Augustus* 38) – something that probably started with his own adopted sons Gaius and Lucius.

Membership of the Senate continued to be highly desirable during the Principate, and there were fierce objections when Augustus reduced its size (Dio 54.13; Galinsky 1996: 37). Augustus changed Sulla’s arrangements for senatorial careers in two main ways. Firstly, since he relied on ex-praetors and ex-consuls to do many jobs, he increased the supply. He lowered the minimum ages, to 36 for consuls; he raised the number of praetors from eight to ten in 23 and to twelve by the end of the reign; especially from 5 onwards, he allowed more than one pair of consuls to serve in the course of a year; those who took over later in the year were called ‘suffects’. Secondly, powers and responsibilities tended to be moved from the junior offices to the senior.

Since none of the junior posts except the quaestorship were necessary steps towards the higher offices, it became hard to recruit people to them. People failed to put themselves forward for election as *vigintiviri* (young men holding their first political office, more junior than the quaestors), tribunes, or aediles, and emergency measures sometimes had to be taken, appointing *equites* to the posts or forcing ex-quaestors to take the offices, picking them by lot (Dio 54.30, 55.24).

The praetorship and consulship, however, continued to be highly desirable. In 8, Augustus made a law that candidates for office should pay a deposit before the elections, to be forfeited if they were found guilty of ‘illegal

practices'; this, according to Dio (55.5), was in response to the allegation that the consuls of that year and other magistrates had been guilty of bribery. The reality or even suspicion of bribery at elections indicates that there was still at this stage real competition. In AD 11, sixteen praetors held office; Dio (56.25) tells us that this was because, with Rome still in turmoil two years after the Varian disaster, Augustus was reluctant to offend any of those who had put themselves forward. In the years that followed, however, the number was reduced again to twelve.

As already noted, a number of jobs were found for high-ranking senators as the reign went on. In AD 6, a system was set up by which three ex-praetors were chosen by lot to administer the military treasury for three-year terms. The following year, two ex-consuls were appointed as commissioners of the grain supply; like serving consuls, they had lictors to walk before them to clear their way, a sign of their power and the importance of this position. By the time of Augustus' death, there were a number of such positions, with senators in charge of the water supply, public buildings and roads. These men, known as *curatores*, held their posts for long periods, sometimes for life; they were well funded and had permanent, trained staff. They got to know their areas of responsibility well. Such unglamorous, effective administration makes a powerful argument for the superiority of the government of the Principate over that of the Republic. But power had passed from elected officials to appointed ones, and it was the Emperor who made the appointments. The success of these developments establishes a case for the unfashionable view that bureaucracy makes life better. But Augustus was subtle: there were no grand and visible 'ministries' springing up; officials worked quietly in buildings close to the Emperor's home on the Palatine.

As, however, more decisions were taken by the Emperor, the meetings of the Senate itself began to seem less important. In 17, 'since the members of the senate showed a lack of interest in attending its sessions' (Dio 54.18), Augustus increased the fines on those who arrived late. In 11, in a further sign of difficulty in getting senators to carry out their responsibilities, Augustus was forced to reduce the quorum in the Senate, allowing the Senate's decrees to be valid even if fewer than four hundred senators were present. In 9, he set aside two days a month for meetings of the Senate, and ensured that no courts or other institutions that required senators to be present met on that day; he increased the fines for non-attendance. Augustus' own lack of confidence in the effectiveness of these measures, however, is revealed by the provision that, if there were so many absentees from the Senate that it became impractical to punish them all, the offenders would have to draw lots, with just one in five being forced to pay the fine.

One area in which the Senate found its powers increased was the law. At least for 'political' cases, the Senate started to sit as a court. From 4, a committee of the Senate was hearing cases of extortion, alongside, or perhaps replacing, the oldest of the standing courts (*quaestiones*). Senators also heard

cases of adultery under the Julian laws and the *lex Papia Poppaea*, and treason cases. (Some historians believe that the use of the Senate as a court for cases of adultery and treason did not start until very early in Tiberius' reign.) The Senators' judgement in 'treason' cases was problematic. The term used for treason was *maiestas minuta* (*maiestas* for short): the 'diminution of the majesty' of the Roman People. If the Emperor was the protector of the People, with his *tribunicia potestas*, did an attack on him, or even criticism, amount to a 'diminution of the majesty' of the Roman People collectively? The Emperor was, of course, a senator and might be present at a trial, and all senators depended on the Emperor for the advancement of their careers; their votes would not be secret from each other or the Emperor. In AD 8, Cassius Severus was prosecuted under the treason law for slander of the famous, including Tiberius (Tacitus, *Annals* 1.72); other unknown writers were prosecuted in AD 12.

The balance of power between Emperor and Senate has already been examined in [Chapter 14](#). The senators of the Principate should not be dismissed as completely powerless: no one man can do everything and take all decisions himself. However, the supremacy of Augustus was clear, above all in his control of finances.

This could operate at an individual level. Augustus exercised control over the composition of the Senate, and ensured a supply of grateful clients, by often giving money to those who did not have the property qualification to be a senator, to enable them to remain in the Senate or to join it, for example, Marcus Hortalus, the grandson of the great orator Hortensius (Tacitus, *Annals* 2.37).

In the area of the public finances, too, Augustus had the upper hand. A fundamental weakness of the Senate throughout our period was its lack of resources. The *aerarium* (public treasury) did not have the money needed to provide the public with necessary facilities such as water, fire fighting, and policing; most damagingly, the state could not provide for the needs of the soldiers, who looked to their own commanders especially for the means to live in retirement, which for them started in their early forties. This was made good by wealthy and powerful individuals – in Augustus' reign, primarily by himself and Agrippa. Augustus made very obvious the inadequacy of public funds by repeatedly giving his own money to the *aerarium*, and in the last decade of his reign, he created a new military treasury whose funds could only be used for the armed forces, reducing the Senate's freedom to make decisions on government spending. He was given a vast amount of money to run the imperial provinces and, since his power was continually renewed as governor-in-chief of these provinces, and governors only had to account for their spending at the end of their terms of office, he never had to present his accounts to the Senate.

There was a large number of *novi homines* from all over Italy who came into the Senate in the triumphal period, including extremely successful

politicians such as Statilius Taurus and Agrippa (both military men). In the middle years of Augustus' reign, as we have seen, the nobles again dominated the consulship. In the last decade of his life, however, *novi homines* were again reaching the highest offices. This may have been due to the influence of Tiberius, since many were his supporters; or it may be that Augustus no longer felt it necessary to win over the nobles; or, since *novi homines* often came to power through military success, it may reflect the greater amount of fighting done at this time.

Knights

The *equites* were the richest citizens of Rome, excluding the members of the Senate. There are three common but mistaken assumptions about them: that they formed a class of businessmen, while senators were landowners; that their interests were opposed to those of the Senators; and that they had no role in politics until the time of Augustus.

Senators throughout this period were very concerned with business, as Cicero's letters reveal, using agents since they were officially forbidden to engage in commerce. Many *equites* were primarily landowners, and even those who were engaged in business invested much of their money in land, for respectability and profit.

Naturally, it is the quarrels between senators and *equites*, over the makeup of the jury courts and the appointment of Pompey to fight the pirates and Mithridates, that we hear about, but, as men of property, they shared many common interests and frequently co-operated.

The involvement of the equestrian class in political affairs was always far greater than simply serving on the jury courts. The grandest of the *equites* were not really private businessmen but the financial arm of the state. Because the Roman state had very little money by modern standards, any work that required major investment, such as supplying the army, collecting taxes or managing public building projects, was taken on by associations of *publicani*. These associations were the preserve of the *equites*: no senators or freedmen could be (legally) involved. It is significant that these institutions, which delivered public services, were by far the biggest businesses of Roman times. Figures such as Andrew Carnegie or Bill Gates – leaders of a private business enterprise whose turnover is greater than the GDP of a small country – have only existed since the Industrial Revolution.

The origin of the term *equites* ('cavalrymen') is military. Within the equestrian order was an elite group, those originally entitled to be given a horse by the state for use in battle. Augustus recalled the military associations of the equestrian class by reviving the cavalry parade, which took place yearly on 15 July.

Augustus created a number of military posts for *equites*. They had always supplied junior officers (military tribunes) and cavalry commanders. By a natural extension, since most Roman cavalry were non-citizen auxiliary troops, command of all auxiliary troops went to *equites*, and of the fleet, since that too was distinct from the legions. *Equites* also filled posts where there was a particularly strong personal connection to the emperor: they were Prefects of the Praetorian Guard, Augustus' special troops; prefects, legionary commanders and administrators in Egypt, Augustus' special province; and procurators (financial officials) of the imperial provinces. In AD 6, another major responsibility was given to an equestrian in the form of command of the

newly-created fire service, the *vigiles*. At some point after AD 7, an equestrian was appointed prefect of the grain supply. These were posts with an equivalent authority and responsibility to those held by senators.

Measures were taken to recognise and enhance the prestige of the *equites*. The first fourteen rows of seats were reserved for senators and *equites* in theatres from 67, on the motion of a tribune, Roscius Otho. The law was certainly unpopular at first – it caused riots during Cicero’s consulship in 63 – but it was kept in force. In AD 5, Augustus also reserved front row seats for them at the Circus Maximus.

Until AD 11, a rule was in force that represented an attempt to remind the richer citizens of Rome of what was and was not proper behaviour: any equestrian who joined a disreputable band of criminals and slaves by becoming a gladiator was stripped of his citizenship. As, however, this was failing to prevent certain members of the Roman elite from falling for the lure of becoming admired as a hero by their fellow men and lusted after by women, *equites* were allowed to fight as gladiators. As Dio comments drily (56.25), ‘in this way they incurred death instead of disfranchisement’.

In general, Augustus consistently sought to engage the *equites* in the running of the Empire and create a sense of exclusivity and responsibility. He carried out a review of the membership of this class (the *recognitio equitum*) in 13 and every five years afterwards, parallel to the reviews of the Senate. An indication of the importance of the *equites* to Augustus is that, at the climax of the *Res Gestae* (35.1), he says that the decision to call him *pater patriae* was made by ‘the Senate, the equestrian order and the whole Roman people’, inserting the *equites* into the traditional formula *senatus populusque Romanus*.

Common people

The *populus Romanus* was all Roman citizens anywhere in the Empire. Although reference continued to be made to the Senate and People of Rome, the *senatus populusque Romanus* (SPQR for short – the initials are still used in Rome today, for example on manhole covers), when we refer to ‘the people’ in this period what is meant is the *plebs urbana*, the citizens in Rome who were not senators or *equites* (Purcell 1994: 646). These ‘plebs’ must be distinguished from ‘the plebeians’, who were all the citizens who did not belong to the tiny patrician class (including many of the most distinguished nobles), but also from the modern meaning of the term ‘plebs’: they included all but the very richest of the citizen body. They did comprise almost all of the *populus Romanus* for whom it was practical to vote on a regular basis.

There were frequent gatherings of the people, in the voting assemblies, in meetings where the people were addressed by magistrates (called *contiones*), for religious ceremonies or festivals and for the call-up for the army. People also organised themselves into *collegia*, a term that mainly referred to trade guilds but also included any free association of city dwellers. The *collegia* were regarded as dangerous breeding-grounds for violence, and Caesar abolished them.

Much space has been taken up in the narrative chapters of this book by the problems of the *plebs* and various politicians’ attempts to deal with them. Augustus was much the most successful, but discontent did not disappear after the early years of his rule. In AD 6 a combination of famine, new taxes, flooding and fires led to anonymous postings being put up at night and fears of a public uprising. It took a major grain distribution, and a set of particularly fine gladiatorial games put on in memory of Nero Drusus by his sons Germanicus and Claudius, to calm the situation. Nonetheless, the atmosphere in Rome remained so volatile that elections could not be held and Augustus simply appointed the magistrates for the following year.

In elections after this, Augustus posted a list of the candidates that he favoured, which could be a large number in relation to the number of posts available. This reduced the importance of the electoral process. Tacitus indicates that there was then a significant change to the process of choosing magistrates at the very beginning of Tiberius’ reign, although he is not completely clear:

Elections [in late AD 14] were transferred from the citizens’ assemblies (held in the Campus Martius) to the senate. Hitherto, though the most important were settled by decision of the *princeps*, some were still left to the wishes of the assembly of the tribes. The people raised no objection to the loss of this prerogative, except

perhaps in casual conversation, while the senate gladly acquiesced, since it was consequently spared the need for expense and undignified solicitation of votes.

(*Annals* 1.15)

This seems to mean that the senate preselected the candidates for the magistracies, presenting to the People only as many candidates as there were posts to fill. All that the People's vote did was to put them in order: it was a popularity contest, not an election. Tacitus is clear that candidates no longer had to canvass for votes among the People. This move occurred only after Augustus' reign; however, the fact that it happened so soon after Augustus' death, and with so little protest, shows that Augustus had allowed the electoral process gradually to lose all meaning.

The *plebs* lost their freedom and their power, but not their hope. There was a lot of poverty at Rome, but also considerable social mobility, indicated by inscriptions and by the indignant comments of all our upper-class sources about common people getting above themselves. In the ancient world there was terrible prejudice against craftsmen and retailers, based on a belief that the only honest source of money was agriculture. (The idea that people deserve to earn money for services, as well as for producing something that you can touch and, in most cases, eat, was slow to develop.) However, there were a lot of people and a lot of money in Rome, and fortunes to be made. Money made in trade could be made respectable by investment in land; Rome had the filth but also some of the opportunities of Victorian London.

Et cetera: women, slaves and freedmen

It should be emphasised that, among the *plebs urbana*, many businesses were run by women, especially but not only shops. This is paralleled outside Rome in the other cities of Italy. Among the upper class, women were subordinated more fully to men, but there were powerful women who had great influence on their more visible menfolk, such as Brutus' mother Sempronia and, of course, as Rome turned into a monarchy and the domestic affairs of the royal family became central to the political life of the state, the women of that family became very important.

A provision of the *lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis*, passed in 18, illustrates the way in which women even in adulthood failed to achieve full independence from their fathers. If a married woman's father caught his daughter red-handed with a lover, or if the wife and lover had been caught by the husband and he was called in, he could kill them without fear of punishment: in fact, he had an obligation to, since he was still thought of as responsible for his daughter's behaviour – but he had to kill both, his daughter as well as her lover. A husband who caught his wife red-handed could only kill the lover if he was of very low social status, and could not kill his wife at all.

On the other hand, under the *lex Julia de maritibus ordinandis* of the same year, women who produced children gained more rights to control their own property (those without children continued, even after marriage, to have a male *tutor* whose permission needed to be given for certain property dealings). Augustus also increased the amount that some women could receive in inheritance. An old law, the *lex Voconia* of 169, had forbidden women from being named as the main heir in a will, and from receiving more than the main heir; Augustus relaxed these restrictions.

There were perhaps 3 million slaves in Italy under Augustus, in a total population of 7.5 million (Brunt 1971: 124–5). The grievances of slaves were, of course, central to the Spartacus revolt of 73–70, but also important in the Catilinarian uprising of 63, the disturbances of 47 and the campaigns of Sextus Pompey between 46 and 36. Roman citizens were often afraid of being swamped by the number of slaves, but it should be remembered that slaves died earlier than citizens and, since their living conditions and rights to form and to formalise relationships were highly restricted, they had fewer children.

Caesar took something like a million Gauls as prisoners of war between 58 and 52. These were imported to Italy as slaves. Although some Italians ended up captured and sold into slavery in the turbulent conditions of the late Republic and Triumvirate, and some became so poor or indebted that they actually entered into slavery voluntarily in order to survive, the overwhelming majority of slaves were foreign. Slavery was mostly a form of enforced immigration into Italy.

There was great variation in the lives of slaves. They did not all serve the rich: families of quite modest means had at least one slave. Domestic slaves, who lived in houses with families, were cooks, gardeners, nurses, tutors, personal attendants, clothes-makers and entertainers; some worked for the family's businesses, as craftsmen and retailers alongside free men and women doing the same jobs, often being given a sum of money (*peculium*) to invest (Stambaugh 1988: 96). Slaves born and brought up in the household (*vernae*) were favoured. Public slaves in the cities cleaned the streets or repaired the aqueducts; the least lucky kept the fires burning to heat the public baths. Chain gangs in the country worked on farms, in quarries and in mines.

It was forbidden by law for a slave to be tortured to produce evidence against his master. Augustus, frustrated that this was making successful prosecutions more difficult, issued a decree in 8 that, when necessary, slaves of accused masters should be sold to the state or to the emperor, so that they could be tortured and made to testify against their former owners. This was a controversial measure, though those who objected were almost certainly thinking of masters' rights rather than slaves'.

For many slaves eventual freedom was an expectation. The promise of freedom helped masters to control their slaves, and freed slaves no longer had to be maintained at their masters' expense. Perhaps a third of slaves overall would become free. Therefore a significant proportion of the Italian citizen population, and certainly of the citizen population of Rome, consisted of ex-slaves and their families. Between 58 and 45, perhaps 200,000 people in Rome were freedmen and their families, out of a total population of some 600,000–800,000; very many of them will have been among those receiving public grain, who may have numbered 320,000 between 57 and 46 (Nicolet 1994: 605).

There was concern to control the process by which former slaves became added to the roll of citizens, balancing the need to find a place in society for this useful class of people with a desire to maintain the numbers of citizens with pure Italian blood. The extent of this worry can be seen in the *lex Papia* of 65, which tried to drive out from Rome every free person living there who was not of Italian origin. The idea that Augustus was concerned not to 'dilute' Italian blood, reported by Suetonius in *Augustus* 40 in the middle of what is admittedly a very unbalanced account of Augustus' attitude to the freeing of slaves, should not be dismissed on the ground that there were already many non-Italians in the citizen body. People are often not rational about these things, as can be seen from some of the arguments against immigration today: the British citizen body has, of course, for many centuries, been of far more mixed descent than the Italian citizen body of the late first century BC. Even at his death in AD 14, Augustus left instructions to the citizen body not to free too many slaves (it was traditional for a large number of slaves to be freed at the funeral of an important man), nor to admit too many men to citizenship (Dio 56.33).

The *lex Fufia Caninia* of 2 set a limit to the number of slaves that could be manumitted (set free and made citizens) in their master's will. The *lex Aelia Sentia* of AD 4 prescribed that the owner must be at least twenty years old and the slave at least thirty, and that in many cases manumission must be conducted before a tribunal. These restrictive measures should be set against laws that tried to treat ex-slaves with a degree of fairness and to give them definite and clear rights. Those who had been set free by their masters informally, without going through the official ceremony, usually so that their masters did not have to pay the tax on manumission, were of intermediate status, neither slave nor citizen, and were known later as 'Junian Latins' after the *lex Junia* (possibly passed in 17, but conceivably belonging to the reign of Tiberius). They could not make a will or receive legacies made by others in their wills. A provision was made in the *lex Junia* that if they married a Roman or Latin citizen and had children they could apply for citizenship for themselves and their children. The same law, however, stated that those slaves who had done anything serious enough to lead their owners to put them in bonds or brand them, or who had been convicted in court and sent to prison or to the arena to fight men or wild beasts, were, even if freed according to the rules, classed as *dediciti* (given the same status as prisoners of war). They, like the 'Junian Latins', could neither make a will nor benefit from one; they could not live within a hundred miles of Rome; and, unlike the 'Junian Latins', they had no hope of achieving a higher status. As observed by Gaius, a jurist (writer on legal matters) of the second century AD, they enjoyed 'the worst class of freedom'.

Freedmen were allowed to settle in some of the colonies founded to draw off the surplus population of Rome and provide for those residents who were looking for new opportunities or were having trouble surviving in the city. Caesar's colony at Corinth, a commercial city, was specifically for freedmen, but they were also among the colonists in his settlements in Africa and Spain.

While freed slaves owed certain obligations to their ex-masters, remaining their clients, such duties were often not too burdensome. They should be set against the training in often highly useful and marketable skills, especially account keeping, that higher grades of slave had received, and the investment that ex-masters often made in their former slaves' businesses, such as buying a shop for them to run.

In AD 6–7, the fire service of the night-watchmen (the *vigiles*) was created; it consisted of freedmen and was an opportunity for freedmen to serve a military role while staying in Rome. Service to the state of a more exalted kind was performed by the *seviri Augustales*, rich freedmen in Italian towns who had the privilege of organising the worship of Augustus' guardian spirit or *genius*.

17

RELIGION

Traditional cults

Religion in the ancient Mediterranean appears from our evidence to have been primarily a public matter. The gods did not follow human standards of morality and religion was not so much concerned with individual belief and behaviour as with ensuring the success of the community through the correct carrying out of ritual and fulfilment of obligations. Worship of the city's gods was communal, involving processions and open-air sacrifices. Even the shrines in individual houses (*lararia*) were often the scenes of gatherings of the whole household.

Much Roman belief looks to us today like superstition. A thunderbolt might indicate the disapproval of the gods towards what was being done or said, a flame that leaped high in the air their approval. Naturally, the interpretation of such omens could be a matter of dispute, but it is not until some way into our period that there is any evidence of a distinction being made between more and less 'respectable' elements within religion. Some Romans who believed themselves to be sophisticated mocked some of the beliefs in signs and portents, as is clear from the second book of Cicero's *On Divination*, written in 44/43, although the first book presents the case for belief in traditional augury. Nigidius Figulus, praetor in 58, was the first Roman, so far as we know, to define certain traditional practices as belonging to the world of magic as distinct from religion. Later, Augustus and his supporters, as we saw in [Chapter 12](#), made great play with the idea of the difference between proper and improper religion in their abuse of Cleopatra.

It should not be assumed that the upper classes took a sceptical attitude towards religion or interpreted it in a more philosophical manner, while the *plebs* clung to their superstitions. There was great ambiguity in attitudes within the elite. In 33, Agrippa drove 'astrologers and charlatans' from Rome (Dio 49.43). But according to Suetonius (*Augustus* 94) Augustus himself eagerly consulted astrologers.

It cannot be stressed too strongly that religion was not, for the Romans, a distinct area of activity. Every aspect of life had a religious dimension. The concept of the separation of church and state, which is central to the history, politics and self-definition of the United States, would have been incomprehensible to Romans of this period.

There was no priestly class in Rome: the *pontifex maximus*, the chief priest, the pontiffs, advisers of the Senate and People on sacred matters, the augurs, who observed the flight of birds to find out the will of the gods, and the *quindecimviri sacris faciundis*, interpreters of the oracles of the ancient prophetess the Sibyl, were all senators. The Senate was the chief authority on religious matters, deciding whether to accept or ban new cults and what counted as an omen. (This is why senators, as a group, were hostile to astrologers, who claimed to be experts with a particular kind of religious

knowledge and therefore presented a challenge to their power.) It always met in a consecrated place (a *templum*). Even the Rostra, the platforms from which politicians addressed the people in the Forum, were *templa*.

Because there was no clear distinction between religion and the rest of life, it was self-evident to the Romans that struggles for political power involved struggles for religious power. The *lex Domitia* of 104 took away the right of existing pontiffs to select new priests and set up a special popular assembly to elect them, modelled on that used since the third century to elect the *pontifex maximus*. The law was repealed by Sulla but brought back into law by the tribune Labienus, a *popularis* and supporter of Caesar, in 63. Ironically, after Caesar's death in 44 his closest colleagues removed the right of the People even to elect the *pontifex maximus*. Antony got the pontiffs to appoint Lepidus Chief Priest. Augustus brought back election, and was naturally voted in as *pontifex maximus* himself.

It is difficult both to judge how sincere or cynical politicians were in their use of religion, and who was in the right in cases of dispute. The attempt of Bibulus, who was an augur, to obstruct every single piece of Caesar's legislation in 59, on the grounds that he had either seen or was watching out for evil omens on the day Caesar proposed it, was unprecedented. Since he was forced by the hostility of the crowds to stay at home and send out notices, while the standard procedure for declaring bad omens was to go to the Forum and make a public announcement, it is uncertain whether his objections counted. In any case, only the Senate as a whole could declare a law invalid on religious grounds. (Compare the decision in 57 over Clodius' Temple of Liberty built on the site of Cicero's house, when the Senate had to confirm the decision of the college of pontiffs: North 2000: 27.) Although some tried to claim that Bibulus' announcements made all of Caesar's legislation that year null and void, his laws remained in force.

One thing is clear: the Republican belief in collective, collegial power applied to religion as much as to politics. Caesar could not use his position as *pontifex maximus* to overrule Bibulus. The *pontifex maximus* spoke for the college of pontiffs in the Senate, and had the power to choose and discipline the pontiffs (North 2000: 23), but did not have authority over other priests such as the augurs. Higher administrative status did not give him the power to rule on matters of procedure or interpretation. It was not until Augustus that the Chief Priest became the head of Roman religion and adviser to the Senate on all religious matters. But there is nothing in Roman religion that compares with the moral and intellectual authority of the Pope within the Catholic Church, nor could there be in a religion that had no unified set of teachings.

Among the few who dedicated their whole time to serving the gods were the Vestal Virgins, who looked after the everlasting flame in the temple of Vesta in the Forum; it was believed that if this flame went out Rome would fall. (Women, of course, could not in any case hold political office; but these women came from powerful families.) They had to preserve their virginity,

not because that was generally expected of priestesses but because they imitated the virgin goddess whom they served. Any who failed to keep their purity were buried alive.

Only Vesta had her own priestesses, and among the major gods only Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus (the deified Romulus) had *flamines*, that is, priests dedicated to a single god (North 2000: 6). The *flamen Dialis* (priest of Jupiter) was not allowed to ride a horse, look on a dead body, or spend more than three nights together out of his own bed. This, therefore, was one priesthood that could not be combined with a regular senatorial career. It was so unpopular that the position was not filled for over seventy years from 86. The *flamen Dialis* Cornelius Merula had committed suicide after Marius had taken over Rome; Marius' young nephew Caesar was marked out to be the next *flamen*, but when Sulla retook Rome he cancelled this along with all other proposals of Marius and Cinna. In the absence of a *flamen Dialis*, the rituals he was meant to perform were carried out by the whole college of pontiffs.

Alongside the cults that were concerned with the whole city were others that appealed to certain particular groups of people – for example, Ceres, the goddess of wheat and other basic foodstuffs, was, not surprisingly, popular with the poor in Rome – or operated on the level of the neighbourhood or household. There was no conflict between these cults and the cults of the city.

During the late Republic, the Romans developed a fascination with the remote past and the origins of their traditions. Naturally, they took a particular interest in religion: in the religious sphere there were survivals of clothing and rituals whose significance had been forgotten. Varro wrote an encyclopaedia of ancient religious traditions, *Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum*.

However, the appearance of continuity could be deceptive. An indication of how a festival could maintain the same ritual but change its significance is provided by the Parilia held in Rome in April (Beard 1994: 738). Participants prayed to the god Pales and leapt through bonfires. At first the festival was concerned with animals' health and productivity; in the late Republic, by which time Rome was a thoroughly urban community, it was a celebration of the day of the founding of the city; under Caesar it became a celebration of his victory at Munda. This reminds us of how difficult it can be to establish the 'point' of a ritual. And we do not know if the worshippers in Caesar's time thought only of Munda or continued also to pray for fat sheep and remember the founding of Rome.

Immigrant gods

The Romans were, of course, from the start a part of the wider Mediterranean world and, like all worshippers in polytheistic religions, they were open to influences from outside. *Haruspices*, who discovered the will of the gods by inspecting the guts of sacrificed animals, were said to originate among the Etruscans. In very early times, Greek Heracles, taking on some Etruscan influences, became Roman Hercules. The Greek gods Apollo, Castor and Pollux were worshipped from the early fifth century. The Sibylline oracles, which it was traditionally believed had been preserved on the Capitol since the late sixth century, were in Greek. The Greek gods, with their humanlike images and the stories of their dealings with each other and with mortals, strongly affected the perception of the Roman gods to which they were supposed to be equivalent. Roman deities that had no connections with Greek gods often seem to have had only the form of *numina* ('powerful presences'), beings without shape, whose worship involved no images or myths.

The cult of Mithras arrived in Rome from Persia in the late first century. It was a 'mystery' religion, whose followers had to keep their rituals secret. This secrecy and exclusivity might have seemed threatening; but, perhaps because it placed great emphasis on discipline and assigned its worshippers different ranks, it was to become very popular with soldiers, especially officers, throughout the Empire.

Alien religious beliefs were not always a barrier to good relations between Romans and foreigners. Although, unlike any of the other varieties of religion mentioned in this chapter, Judaism could never be combined with the worship of the gods of Rome, Suetonius (84) particularly mentions the Jews attending Caesar's funeral: Caesar had been grateful to the Jews of Alexandria for helping him when he was in Egypt, and had treated the Jewish population of Rome well.

However, not all foreign cults were equally acceptable. The attitude to the Egyptian gods Isis and Serapis in the late Republic was highly ambiguous. The Senate always regarded them to some extent as a threat, especially Isis, whose priests were independent from the senatorial *pontifices*, and offered their followers personal spiritual guidance (North 2000: 69). The Senate repeatedly voted to destroy these gods' shrines; at the same time, however, it allowed statues of them to stand on the holiest place in Rome, the Capitol, next to statues of Jupiter and Hercules. In 43, the Triumvirs voted to build a new temple to Serapis and Isis (Dio 47.15), but later, after Antony and Cleopatra identified themselves with the two deities, Augustus and his supporters lost their enthusiasm for them.

Augustus was, in general, old-fashioned and cautious in his attitude towards foreign gods. In his war against Antony and Cleopatra, he had made it a major part of his propaganda that he was fighting for the traditional gods of Rome

against not only Isis and Serapis but all the strange, animal-headed gods of Egypt. In 28, the same year in which he restored eighty-two temples of the gods in Rome (*Res Gestae* 20.4), he banned Egyptian religious rituals within the city (Dio 53.2); in 21, Agrippa renewed the ban.

He treated with great respect such foreign rites as were ancient and well established, but held the rest in contempt. For example, having been initiated at Athens and afterwards sitting in judgment of a case at Rome involving the privileges of the priests of Attic Ceres, in which certain matters of secrecy were brought up, he dismissed his counsellors and the throng of bystanders and heard the disputants in private. But on the other hand he not only omitted to make a slight detour to visit Apis, when he was travelling through Egypt, but highly commended his grandson Gaius for not offering prayers at Jerusalem as he passed by Judaea.

(Suetonius, *Augustus* 93)

Since the Egyptian and Jewish religions were more ‘ancient and well established’ than Greek religion, what really seems to have made the difference between the religions that Augustus respected and those he despised was how close they were to Roman religion and therefore how respectable they were in the Romans’ eyes.

Defender of the faith

The preservation and revival of traditional religion was a major part of Augustus' programme of restoring the state. Aside from his building work on shrines and temples, Augustus increased the numbers of festivals celebrated in Rome.

In 11 or 10, Augustus appointed a *flamen Dialis* for the first time since 87 (see above). It was not an appointment that was attractive to an ambitious member of a military aristocracy, but now that many senators had little left to them but social prestige, this time-hallowed and undoubtedly prestigious position might have seemed more tempting.

In the middle of the section of the *Res Gestae* in which he praises his own generosity, Augustus mentions his open-handedness towards the gods as well as men: 'I have dedicated gifts from booty to the value of 100 million sesterces in the Capitol, and in the temples of the Deified Julius, Apollo, Vesta and Mars the Avenger' (21.2). Suetonius tells us (*Augustus* 30) that on a single occasion he deposited 'in the shrine of Jupiter Capitolinus ... sixteen thousand pounds of gold, besides pearls and other precious stones to the value of fifty million sesterces'.

However, Augustus was not only concerned with the gods of the whole city: he emphasised the links between state, neighbourhood and family through the importance that he attached to the *lares* and *penates*. *Lares* were ancestral spirits, worshipped in individual households, but there were also *lares* of Rome, who had a shrine at the top of the Sacred Way; they protected Rome's territory. *Penates*, gods of thresholds and store cupboards, were also worshipped both in homes and in a shrine on the Velia hill. Augustus restored the public shrines of Rome's *lares* and *penates* (*Res Gestae* 19.2). He also paid great attention to the *lares compitales*, 'gods of the crossroads', who had shrines at every street corner, where they were worshipped with Liber Pater, a rather rough male fertility god. Caesar had abolished the festivals of these *lares*, the Compitalia, because they provided occasions for public disturbance. Augustus restored the festival and the shrines but, on becoming *pontifex maximus*, replaced Liber Pater by worship of his own *genius* or guardian spirit (Horace, *Odes* 4.5.29–36).

In 30, the Senate had decreed that mention of Augustus' *genius* should be included in prayers for the People and Senate of Rome. This associated him with Rome itself and carried the implication that he was Rome's *paterfamilias*: a family would pray for the *genius* of its *paterfamilias* at their *lararium* (shrine to the household gods). It was an early pointer to Augustus' eventual status as *pater patriae*. When Romans worshipped the *genius Augusti* along with the *lares compitales*, they were adoring their 'father'.

On one occasion, Augustus diverted honours meant for him, which he found excessive and embarrassing, to Apollo:

About eighty silver statues of myself, on foot, on horseback, or in a chariot, had been erected in the city. I myself removed them and with the money realised from them I placed gold gifts in the temple of Apollo in my name and in that of those who put up the statues in my honour.

(*Res Gestae* 24.2)

The removal of the statues probably occurred around 28, and the statues were perhaps put up by provincials from the East (Cooley 2009: 212). Suetonius (*Augustus* 52) associates them with the proposed dedication of a temple to Augustus himself.

This did not mean, however, that all religious honours were unwelcome. We have already seen that he accepted the Senate's decree that his *genius* should be worshipped. Earlier in the *Res Gestae* (9.1–2), Augustus had recorded with pride that the Senate had decreed that vows for his welfare should be made by the consuls and priests every five years, often accompanied by the celebration of games (this decree dates to 31, according to Dio 51.19), and that citizens in towns across the Empire prayed to the gods on their couches for his health: statues of the gods were sometimes placed on couches, as if they were enjoying a feast.

Augustus was indeed more than a priest and one whose person was sacrosanct like the tribunes: he was the son of a god. When Augustus and his fellow Triumvirs established a state cult to Divus Julius on 1 January 42, it was far from being sudden or unexpected. During his lifetime, Julius Caesar had been given the right to have a priest (*flamen*) of his cult. His image was placed in processions of the gods. Caesar was being referred to as Divus Julius at least by September 44 (Cicero, *Philippics* 2.110).

How new a development in Roman religious thinking was the cult of Caesar? The worship of rulers is an area in which it is particularly difficult for us to understand and have sympathy with ancient ways of thinking. However, in Greek and Roman religion, since the gods were conceived of as being in many ways like humans, but with exceptional powers, the idea that a very powerful man was a god was not uncommon. There had been cults to living rulers in the East ever since the time of Alexander the Great. The celebration of Caesar's birthday and the naming of a month after him both have precedents in honours given to the Hellenistic kings who ruled the territories conquered by Alexander. Prominent Romans were also given divine honours in the East: games for Scaevola, governor of Asia in 120; dedications and statues for Pompey – and months named after him. Temples were offered to Cicero, who declined (*ad Att.* 5.21), and Pompey, who didn't.

There are also traditional elements in native Roman religion from which Caesar worship may be said to develop. Roman mythology included men who

became gods, notably Romulus, the first king of Rome. Above all, perhaps, there was a strong cult of the dead, in which ancestral spirits (*manes*) were regarded as divine.

What about the cult of the living? Prominent Romans certainly paraded their connections with the gods. Scipio Africanus, the man who defeated Hannibal, claimed to be the son of Jupiter. Sulla boasted of having the favour of Venus, and later Pompey and Caesar, who believed he was her descendent, competed to claim connection to the goddess. Antony, who associated himself with Dionysus in Greece and Asia and Osiris/Serapis in Egypt, asserted in Rome that his family was descended from Hercules.

In a Triumph, the general was dressed and made up as the god Jupiter Optimus Maximus. This assumption of the role of a god was supposed to be strictly temporary: a slave next to him would whisper 'Remember you are mortal' throughout the procession. However, Pompey in 63 had been allowed to wear triumphal clothes, the clothes of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, at all Circus games; during his dictatorships, Caesar was allowed to do so at all public events. After Marius' victory over the Cimbri and Teutones, the people promised to make offerings of food and wine to him along with the gods (Plutarch, *Marius* 27). Significantly, they called him a new founder of Rome, so comparing him to the deified original founder, Romulus. For all this, Romans were in general uneasy about worshipping a man while he was still alive. Worshipping a dead man caused less discomfort because, as noted above, sacrificing to the spirits of the dead was a normal part of Roman religion.

Being the son of a god, Augustus could be viewed as in some way more than human himself. As early as Virgil's *Eclogues*, published in around 39–38, a character, Tityrus, making a clear reference to Augustus, exclaims 'it is a god who has blessed us with this time of peace./For to me that man will be a god for ever; and at his altars/A tender lamb from my fold shall pour out his blood in sacrifice' (1.6–8).

After Actium, libations (the pouring of drink onto the floor, usually in honour of the gods) had been made to Augustus, and his name was added to those of the gods in hymns. In Virgil's *Georgics*, published in around 29, Augustus is addressed at the end of a list of gods of agriculture, in the confident expectation that he will become a god of the skies after his death, although the reference is still vague: 'though yet/We cannot know which heavenly hierarchy will speed/To claim you as its own' (1.24–5). Horace tiptoes around the subject. He prays for Jupiter to send the Romans a god or goddess who can heal them; one possibility is Mercury – but perhaps he will come to Earth in disguise, 'imitating a youth and willing to be called/ Caesar's avenger' (*Odes* 1.2.43–4). Did Horace literally mean that he thought Augustus was the god Mercury in disguise? It seems unlikely. Horace could claim that he was a poet, and speaking metaphorically: Augustus was *like* a god on earth.

In the Empire, there was less need for subtlety and delicacy. Around the

same time as the date Horace's poem was probably written, 29, Augustus began to accept worship in the Eastern provinces, although Suetonius notes that he insisted on a link to the state as a whole: 'Although well aware that it was usual to vote temples even to proconsuls, he would not accept one even in a province save jointly in his own name and that of Rome' (*Augustus* 52).

The worship of the goddess Roma was common in the Eastern provinces. There were priests of the goddess, festivals and sacrifices, in some cases temples. As time went on, the new cult of Rome and Augustus spread westward: it was introduced into Gaul by Nero Drusus and the first festival was celebrated on 1 August 12.

In 19, a new festival was established to commemorate the date of Augustus' return, the Augustalia (*Res Gestae* 11). Like a god, he now had a festival named after him, at which sacrifices were offered. As we have seen, through an extension of the worship of the goddess Peace, a religious observance involving an altar to 'the Peace of Augustus' had been set up in 13: associating a politician's name with that of a deity was unprecedented. In the cities of Italy, boards of six of the richest and most powerful freedmen, the *seviri Augustales*, looked after the cult of the *genius Augusti* (a way for freedmen, who were barred from many public roles, to perform an honourable duty). All of this stopped short – just – of worshipping Augustus as a god while he was still alive, and he drew attention to his reluctance to be worshipped.

Tacitus claims that some people complained, after Augustus' death, that 'there were no honours left for the gods, now that Augustus chose to be worshipped with temples and godlike images by *flamines* and priests' (*Annals* 1.10), but we need to be aware that he was writing at a time when emperors had taken the ruler cult much further than Augustus did. In the same book (4.38) Tacitus reports that Tiberius was criticised when he was Emperor for refusing to allow worship of himself.

18

PROPAGANDA

Pet poets?

The two most famous poets in the middle of the first century BC, Catullus and Lucretius, were both proudly independent of the political elite. Catullus, from a prosperous family in Verona in Cisalpine Gaul, was a 'Neoteric': he wrote poetry that was sophisticated and meant for a refined audience. He was both a love poet, writing extremely intense poems about a girlfriend he called, confusingly for modern readers, Lesbia (a reference to the poet Sappho of Lesbos), and a hate poet, writing breathtakingly insulting and obscene poems, some about Caesar and his political associates. Lucretius, about whose life nothing is known, wrote a long poem setting out the teachings of the Greek philosopher Epicurus, who believed that we should keep away from politics and the community and make personal friendships the centre of our lives.

If politicians in the late Republic wanted literature that reflected well on them, they had to produce it themselves. Writing was a respectable pursuit for the political class: the first Roman historian, Fabius Pictor, came from a noble family, and the great Cato the Elder wrote on history and agriculture. Caesar wrote histories of the Gallic and Civil Wars, with brilliant success. Cicero wrote a poem on his consulship, which was not so successful: the line 'O fortunatam natam me consule Romam' ('O lucky Rome, born in my consulship') was still being mocked by the satirist Juvenal a century and a half later.

Augustus, on the other hand, is closely associated with the poetry of Virgil and Horace. Virgil's and Horace's families had lost property in the confiscations of the Triumviral period, and were given money and land by Maecenas. It could be argued that they had no choice but to write propaganda in support of Augustus, since he and Maecenas were providing them with their only means of support. It does need to be remembered, however, that Maecenas was not the only patron of writers at this time – the poet Tibullus, for example, was the client of Valerius Messalla – and that they gave their support to Augustus long before his victory in the civil war. Both Virgil and Horace became clients of Maecenas in around 38. At this time Augustus seemed to be in a weak position: it was not until 36 and his victory over Sextus Pompey that it began to look as if he had a good chance of defeating Antony.

It is probably, therefore, too cynical to see the work of these poets as 'dictated' by Maecenas or Augustus himself. In fact, both Virgil and Horace had backgrounds typical of Augustus' political supporters. Virgil came from Cisalpine Gaul; in spite of the example of Catullus, the Cisalpine Gauls generally favoured *popularis* politicians, who had supported their claims to Roman citizenship, and especially Caesar. Horace belonged to the class of wealthy non-Roman Italians who had seen Marius and Caesar as their champions and, once the confiscation of land for veteran soldiers was over,

had high hopes of Augustus, both because he was Caesar's heir, and because his birth family was not part of the Roman nobility, but Italian. (Horace tells us, playing up his 'humble' origins, that his father was a freedman, but he was also a wealthy auctioneer. Horace went to Athens to finish his education, and joined Brutus' army as a military tribune – a junior officer; both facts mark him out as a member of the equestrian class.)

Horace and Virgil were important men within Maecenas' circle, as revealed, with a pretence of modesty, in Horace's *Satires*, written in the thirties. In *Satires* 1.5, Horace tells us that they both travelled down with Maecenas to Brundisium in 37, when Maecenas was helping to bring about the Treaty of Tarentum. In *Satires* 2.6.29–59, Horace complains that he is constantly being pestered by people who want information or favours from Maecenas.

Virgil's *Georgics*, published c. 29, was a poem on Italian agriculture, perfectly in tune with Augustus' policy of promoting all the communities in Italy (*tota Italia* – which, since 41, had included Cisalpine Gaul) and his desire to revive the traditional virtues of Rome's rural past.

Around 28, another poet, Propertius, published his first book of poems. It is a classic collection of what were known as 'love elegies'. A life passed in the single-minded pursuit of love is presented as the ideal. Public service, which is compared to slavery and warfare, is rejected. Poem 1.21 is a lament in which a relative, Gallus, is imagined as speaking from beyond the grave; he had fought against Augustus' troops at Perusia in 41. It might have seemed an impossible task for Maecenas to recruit this poet for the Augustan court, but he managed it. In the first poem of Propertius' second book, which is addressed to Maecenas, he claims that he would write about 'Caesar's wars, great Caesar's works' (line 25), if he had the ability; unfortunately, he can only find inspiration in love. The poem is an example of a common type known as a *recusatio*. The poet begs forgiveness for not being able to produce the kind of poem that has been asked for, but insists that he would if he could. These poems are completely insincere: the poet has no intention of producing a poem different from those he normally writes; ancient poets were not famous for their modesty, so he probably believes that he could perfectly well produce any kind of poetry he put his hand to; and the person addressed has almost certainly not really asked him to change his style. However, writing a *recusatio* shows politeness towards the person addressed by suggesting that this person deserves anything that he wishes.

The theme is repeated in 2.10, but this time with more than a hint of mischief: for twenty lines, Propertius declares that the time has come for him to write about Augustus' military triumphs, before, in the last six lines, he teasingly says that after all he is not quite ready yet. In 2.7, he appears to refer to an early attempt of Augustus, otherwise unrecorded, to introduce the kind of marriage legislation that was eventually passed in 18; he makes it clear in strong terms that he refuses to abandon his love affair with a woman he calls

‘Cynthia’ for respectable marriage and fatherhood. 2.15 mentions Actium, but rather than thanking Augustus for putting an end to conflict he presents the remedy for civil war as men turning from political to sexual passion, making love not war.

But Maecenas did get something for his money. Propertius wrote a poem (2.31) praising the new portico to the Temple of Apollo, built by Augustus on the Palatine Hill and opened in 28. Many scholars believe that what we know as Propertius’ second book was originally two different books, so 2.31 may have been published later than the other poems mentioned, and show Propertius becoming less spiky in his relationship with the new regime. However, in Propertius’ third book, which dates from 20 or later, ambiguity still remains. One poem, 3.12, seems to recall his old attitudes: he tells off a soldier for leaving his lover behind. In poem 3.4 he writes, apparently patriotically, about the Parthian expedition of 21–20 – the emphasis on the expected profit in lines 1–3 might be considered cheeky, but successful generals were happy to boast about the booty they had won; Propertius, however, imagines himself watching the triumphal parade from a window, curled up in his mistress’s lap. Is he being self-mocking or subversive? But in 3.11, Propertius compares himself, hopelessly ‘enslaved’ by a woman, to Antony, and implies (lines 7–8) that he is too old to behave like this; this is a profound change from 2.7, in which he asserts the superiority of the lover over the soldier. By implication, he rejects his older views as those of a foolish young man. (Griffin 1984: 214 has a different view, believing that 3.11 turns the story of Antony and Cleopatra into ‘a more or less frivolous parallel to Propertius’ own difficulties with a dominant woman’.) Poem 3.18 is a lament for the death of Marcellus; 4.6, published around 13, a celebration of victory at Actium. Neither poem shows any obvious sign of distancing or insincerity.

Propertius had been on a long journey, but he was able to take at least some of his old readers with him, by taking gradual steps, using humour, and keeping true to his poetic style. He did not suddenly switch to epic poetry or tragedy. His later poems take inspiration from Callimachus, a Greek poet from Alexandria in Egypt who wrote about the origins of buildings and ceremonies. This subject matter gave him the opportunity to write poems that flattered Augustus, but Callimachus was famously witty and clever, so he was able to keep writing in a manner not too far removed from that of the sparkling love poems of his youth.

Books 1, 2 and 3 of Horace’s *Odes* were published together in 23. Horace himself, who had fought for Brutus and Cassius at Philippi, was living proof of Augustus’ forgiveness. Ode 1.4 is dedicated to Sestius, one of the Republican consuls of 23. In Ode 2.7, Horace greets ‘Pompeius’, a supposed old friend who is mentioned nowhere else in his poetry and whose name is so clearly symbolic of old quarrels (Caesar and Pompey, Augustus and Sextus Pompey) that we may suspect that he has been made up. ‘Who has now

restored you to citizenship?’ asks Horace – the answer is obvious. Horace pretends that he threw away his shield and fled in panic from Philippi – an object of laughter, even to himself, no danger to anyone. Pompeius was ‘sucked back’ into war, so his return to Italy shows that Augustus has forgiven even those who were much more stubborn and persistent enemies than Horace. Now that he has had revenge against the murderers of his father Caesar, as duty (*pietas*) demanded, Augustus is able to show mercy (*clementia*). Horace can party with his friend: ‘Such ecstasy/ is sweet, when friends come home again.’ Partying is never just partying in Horace: it is propaganda for Augustus, who has made it possible for the Romans to party again.

Horace was never a popular poet. Virgil was something of a celebrity: a famously shy man, he is said to have been embarrassed and overwhelmed when he was mobbed in a theatre after the publication of his first book of poems, the *Eclogues*, in around 39–38. Horace wrote for a smaller, more select audience. However, he had just as great a value to Augustus. Virgil’s later writings use poetic forms, serious didactic and epic poetry, which were clearly suited to Augustus’ politics and likely to appeal to those already inclined to support the new regime. Horace took on a genre, lyric poetry, which was traditionally used by those who held a disrespectful attitude to authority, such as the young Propertius, or Catullus, and who believed that love and leisure were more important than war and politics. In cultural terms, Horace took the fight to the enemy.

Here is the fifth poem of Horace’s first book of *Odes* (author’s translation):

Who is it, in crowds of roses, that slim boy
pressing upon you, drenched in scents, down there
in deep shade, Pyrrha, much enjoyed?
For whom do you smooth your honey hair,

stylishly simple? Ah! the loyalties,
the gods that changed, will set him weeping; rough
with blackening winds, the once calm seas
will amaze the green unpractised youth

who now enjoys you, trusting, golden fair,
who hopes you’re always free and fit to love,
a dupe of the deceiving air’s
soft breath. Unhappy those who have

not probed the dazzling surface. In the shrine,
the plaque’s neat letters tell I left my wet

clothes hanging for the sea's divine
great lord, to pay the god my debt.

This is an amazing poem, and one of the most astonishing things about it is that it is the first poem in the *Odes* to deal with a love affair, and it is about saying farewell to love. It is a complex poem, designed, as already noted, to appeal to the sort of sophisticated readers who enjoyed Catullus and Propertius; but, while those poets plunge recklessly into the 'sea of love', immersing themselves in the thrilling highs and terrifying lows, this poem is about escaping from the storms. The narrator has been 'shipwrecked' by his affair with Pyrrha; the last stanza, which describes the tradition of sailors who had survived shipwrecks offering the clothes they had been wearing to Neptune, god of the sea, is a metaphor for the narrator's thankfulness for being 'rescued' from the 'storms' of love. Although it is an intense poem, it is also full of wit. In line 6, where the reader might, through conventional prejudice, expect the narrator to tell us that the woman, Pyrrha, has been made to cry by a hard-hearted man, we unexpectedly find that it is the 'boy' who is crying. In the third stanza, there is an untranslatable pun between *aurea* (golden) and *aura* (breeze). The narrator is also a target of the poet's wit: his claim to have put the torments of love behind him is seriously challenged by the obsessive, almost deranged, way that he imagines the details of the scene of the sexual encounter between Pyrrha and the 'boy' in the first stanza; he is surely an ex-lover of Pyrrha, and his pose in the second stanza of concern and compassion for Pyrrha's new, younger boyfriend fails to disguise his jealousy. Nonetheless, this is a serious poem: the metaphor of the storm corresponds to the common metaphor of the 'ship of state' (used in *Odes* 1.14), and the message that a good life can be lived only once one has freed oneself from violent passion applies not only to love but to politics, where a return to the violent passions of civil war must be avoided at all costs.

Mockery comes through more strongly in the thirteenth poem of Book 1 (author's translation):

When, *Lydia*, rose-skinned *Telephus* you praise
And *Telephus'* smooth limbs – ay me! – my soul
Doth seethe and swell with unrelenting rage.

My thoughts won't hold one place then, nor my skin
Its colour; down my cheeks sly droplets roll
Showing how slow fires break me down within.

I burn if fights, pushed past all bounds by wine,
Defile your shoulders pure, or that wild youth
Brands on your lips a tooth bite's telling sign.

If you'd but listen, you'd not hope he'll keep
Still yours, who, like a savage, wounds that mouth
So sweet and small, in *Venus*' essence steeped.

Thrice blessed – nay, more – whose bonds unbroken stay,
Whose love, rent by no mischievous complaints,
Will yoke them fast until their final day.

This is full of parody of romantic poetry: the Greek names (Lydia and Telephus), the 'rose skin' and the 'smooth limbs'. The narrator is mocked again – he takes the scratch marks on Lydia's shoulders and the bite on her lips as signs that her boyfriend is violent, but we don't get to hear Lydia's view: they may be signs that she is having fun. The narrator, as the last stanza shows, is ready to settle down with Lydia, but Lydia might not be keen: she is probably happy with her 'wild' boyfriend, who again is almost certainly younger than the narrator. However, the real target of the mockery is romantic poetry itself. As David West has shown (1995: commentary on 1.13), the first half of the poem is full of images of cookery: the soul 'seething' or boiling, flesh changing colour, fire 'breaking down' or tenderising the liver and kidneys (Horace uses the word 'macerate', which is still a cookery term in English); these deliberately undercut the high-flown romantic language, making the whole poem ridiculous.

Horace's less grand poems, such as these, were at least as important to Augustus as the poems that openly supported the new politics and urged Romans to do their duty and act with courage (such as poems 1–6 of Book 3, which include Horace's most famous line, 'dulce et decorum est pro patria mori', 'it is pleasant and proper to die for one's country': 3.2.13). They attempted to persuade the self-indulgent and intellectually superior members of the upper classes, who were resistant to seriousness and to patriotic appeals, that it was the Catulluses and Propertiuses of this world, who took their love affairs and their own feelings so seriously and created a sort of cult of love, who were truly ridiculous and crass and that a cool and sophisticated person should have nothing to do with this view of life. Through the mockery to which he subjects his narrator (who is, it seems, like Horace himself, a bachelor in his forties), Horace shows that there is nothing sadder than a middle-aged man who is still longing for younger women and consumed with hatred for the younger boyfriends that they prefer: by all means, he says, satisfy your basic momentary sexual needs with a male or female slave (Horace is anxious to assure his readers that he is not a prude), but wanting to prolong into mature adulthood the passionate emotions of youthful love affairs makes you an idiot. If you marry, you will do your duty to the state and please Augustus; you will also save yourself from becoming a laughing stock.

Virgil died in 19, leaving unfinished the poem on which he had been working for ten years, the *Aeneid*. This was a project of extraordinary boldness, an attempt to create a Roman epic to challenge the Greek epics of

the Trojan War and its aftermath, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Aeneas is a character who is mentioned in the *Iliad*, a relative of Hector, prince of Troy, who survives the destruction of Troy and leads the other survivors round the Mediterranean in a search for a new land in which to settle. The Romans believed that Aeneas was their ancestor: he had come to Latium and started a family of kings; Romulus and Remus, founders of Rome, were his descendants.

Aeneas is portrayed as a man full of a quality the Romans especially admired, *pietas* (dutifulness); although he makes many mistakes along the way, in the end he does his duty to the gods, his family and his country. *Pietas* is a quality that Augustus associated with himself which, combined with the fact that the Julian family claimed Aeneas as their own ancestor, thus identifying themselves as the destined leaders of the Romans, makes it tempting to see Aeneas as representing Augustus. The poem is more subtle than this, however. For example, in the famous episode of the love affair of Dido and Aeneas in Book 4, Aeneas, falling under the erotic spell of a powerful foreign queen, is clearly meant to recall Antony; or perhaps, since he is reminded of his duty and leaves her to come back to Italy, he is Rome itself, or its ruling class, momentarily dazzled by a vision of oriental luxury but saved and led back into the ways of righteousness.

The affair with Dido is not the only time that Aeneas wrongly gives way to passion: he himself, when he tells the story of the fall of Troy in Book 2, admits that he was carried away by *furor* (frenzied anger), which led him to endanger his own life and those of his family and friends. At the very end of the poem, Aeneas kills his enemy Turnus; although he is in the right (Galinsky 1996: 211), he does so in another fit of anger. The poem ends on a note of horror and pity, as Turnus' 'life indignantly fled to the shades below with a groan' (*Aeneid* 12.952). It is perhaps this depressing ending, more than anything else, which has led a number of modern scholars to suggest that Virgil was subverting the pro-Augustan messages that are obviously present elsewhere in the *Aeneid*. However, the message that hatred and revenge must be avoided at all costs, and the warning, implied by the fact that Italians are fighting each other in this climactic battle, that indulgence of such emotions risks a return to bloody civil war, would have been welcome to Augustus. Augustus overruled Virgil's deathbed instructions to destroy the unfinished poem, and ensured that it was published; he clearly did not feel that he was being subverted, and Augustus was not a stupid man.

Up to now, Horace had dealt skilfully with 'the embarrassment, for a sophisticated person, of dealing with a man of commanding power' (Griffin 1984: 190), and Augustus had been subtle and delicate in his turn (Griffin 1984: 202–3). But the death of Virgil left Horace as something close to a Poet Laureate. He wrote the hymn for the Ludi Saeculares in 17, and is said to have been pressed by Augustus into writing a fourth book of *Odes* between 17 and 13, in which the military achievements of Tiberius and Nero Drusus were

celebrated (Suetonius, *Life of Horace* 4). The odes of praise are 4.4 and 4.14; in both these poems Augustus is lavishly flattered as well, and both are followed by poems (4.5 and 4.15) entirely devoted to praise of Augustus. Whether or not this collection was written to order, it is not as successful as the first three books: there is much less humour and invention. The lightness of touch that previously balanced what might have been painful earnestness is gone. There is a sense of exhaustion as Horace returns to old ideas and fails to find anything fresh to add. For example, the theme of the inevitability of death, treated with verve and with lines encouraging enjoyment of the moment in 1.4, 1.9 and 1.11 – ‘carpe diem’: ‘seize (or pluck) the day’ – is rehearsed at excessive length, with plenty of learned references to mythology but without liveliness or wit, in 4.7.

As Virgil was trying to bring the *Aeneid* to completion, and just after Horace’s first three books of *Odes* were published, a very young poet was starting his career. Ovid was born in 42 in Sulmo in central Italy: he was a generation younger than Virgil (born in 70) and Horace (born in 65) and some eight years younger than Propertius. He was also of even higher social status than these older poets and, unlike them, does not appear to have lost any family property in the land confiscations of the late 40s and early 30s. His family had for generations formed part of the local elite in his home town; his background was typical of those men who were now beginning to make their way into the public life of Rome and into the Senate. Ovid, however, turned aside from the path marked out for him, rejecting his training in law, a respectable and politically useful pursuit, to become a full-time poet.

There is a smoothness and ease to Ovid’s poetry that may reflect his comfortable background and the fact that his adult life was not marked by civil war: he was just eleven years old when Augustus won the Battle of Actium. His poetry covers a wide range of genres, but is always marked by light-heartedness and humour. One of his most famous poems is the *Ars Amatoria* – the version that has survived dates from around 1 – which is superficially an example of the serious genre of didactic poetry, like Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura* about Epicurean philosophy, or Virgil’s *Georgics*, but whose ‘teaching’ is about how to get and keep girlfriends and boyfriends.

The *Ars Amatoria* is certainly in some places a cheeky poem. Although Ovid’s target, as with Propertius and Horace, is often himself, with gentle mockery made of the poet’s own supposed inadequacies, for example the comic comparison with the father of didactic poetry, Hesiod, in 1.27–8, he also makes humour out of recommending serious building works of the Emperor and his family (1.69–75: the Porticos of Octavia and Livia, the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine) as places to pick up women. A sensitive person might find this disrespectful. But Ovid is careful not to recommend adultery: he rightly says in 1.33, ‘I sing of naught forbidden by the law,’ and in 1.41 writes carefully, ‘while you’re still free to play the field, feel free to

play fast and loose'. And in 1.177–218 Ovid praises the royal family and prophesies victory for Gaius Caesar in Parthia. In 1.219–28 he returns to his theme, advising men to use the triumph that will follow Gaius' victory as an opportunity to meet women, and impress them with their pretended knowledge of geography, but the joke seems to be mostly on the cynical men and the gullible women who are watching. There is certainly nothing that openly challenges Augustan ideology in the way that Propertius had done in 2.7. Augustus could choose to be offended, and did; we find from a later poem of Ovid (*Tristia* 2.8) that the *Ars Amatoria* had been placed on something that is a reliable sign of abuse of power and loss of freedom, an 'index of forbidden books'.

Over the following decade, Ovid embarked on two very ambitious projects. One, which he completed, was the *Metamorphoses*, an epic poem consisting of a collection of stories, mostly from Greek mythology, rather than a single narrative: the stories were united by the theme of transformation (usually of humans into animals or trees). The second, of which he only wrote half, was the *Fasti*, another long poem that wove together different elements and stories: this was based on the days of the Roman calendar; it related accounts of the religious festivals associated with particular days, and stories associated with them.

It would be easy to say that Ovid had turned from frivolous poems about love and sex to long, serious poems. However, although the form and subject matter of Ovid's poetry had changed, as he demonstrated his versatility, the attitude that Ovid took, and the tone of his writing, remained quite consistent. As noted above, the *Ars Amatoria* is not a serious attack on the institution of marriage or Augustus' marriage legislation; it is quite clearly about young men and women who are not ready to settle down. It is tongue-in-cheek and a little irreverent, but not really subversive. Equally, there is plenty of humour and eroticism in the *Metamorphoses*, and the *Fasti* does not offer the straightforward support for Augustus' religious programme that might be guessed from its subject matter. For example, Ovid gives an account of the festival of Anna Perenna. This was a traditional popular celebration without a trace of the seriousness of Augustan ceremonies such as the Ludi Saeculares: people got drunk and sang rude songs. Ovid enjoys and approves of this (3.523–42; the reason for the rude songs is given in lines 675–96). This, rather than the *Ars Amatoria*, can properly be described as subversive, especially as the date of the festival is the Ides of March: only after 168 lines on Anna Perenna does Ovid mention, briefly, the assassination of Caesar. But the flattery of the royal family continues, for example in *Fasti* 1.1–14, 1.529–36, 2.15–18, 4.857–62 and *Metamorphoses* 15.812–42 and 852–70.

In AD 8, Ovid was exiled to Tomis on the shores of the Black Sea (in modern Romania), on the edge of the Empire. He was exiled because of 'a poem and a mistake' (*Tristia* 2.207). The poem was *Ars Amatoria*; the mistake was too sensitive to be explained (2.208–10), but involved his failure

to 'recognise the true significance' of 'something I saw' (2.103–4). Scholars have assumed that it was something to do with the disgrace of the younger Julia, who was exiled in the same year. Levick (1976: 60–1), who generally takes the view that Augustus was mild towards his enemies, and Galinsky (1996: 268–9), who also takes a strongly positive view of the Emperor, argue that the 'poem' was a 'smokescreen', on the grounds that the *Ars Amatoria* had been published nine years earlier; Ovid's real offence must have been the political one of conspiracy with Julia, or at least failure to report her wrongdoings. But the *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti* might have provoked Augustus' displeasure in places, and Ovid is not known to have had any involvement in politics. In fact, Ovid's refusal to engage in public life may in itself have been a source of annoyance to Augustus, who wanted men of good families throughout Italy to play a role in the new state. Ovid was not the only writer to be exiled that year: Cassius Severus was also punished in AD 8–9, and other prosecutions of writers followed before the end of the reign.

Seneca the Younger, writing in the middle of the first century AD and hoping (without success) to influence his pupil, the emperor Nero, gives a standard Roman view of Augustus in *Concerning Clemency* 1.9.1–11.1. At the beginning of his political career, as a Triumvir, 'he could kill with the best of them ... he was hot-blooded, quick-tempered'; but as Princeps 'his conduct was restrained and merciful'. However, consideration of the careers of the poets of his reign does not support Seneca's neat distinction. Until the 20s, Horace was able to combine with his clear support of the new regime a continuing attachment to aspects of Epicurean philosophy, which advised detachment from public life, and a noticeably indulgent and tolerant attitude towards casual sex, both heterosexual and homosexual. Later on, he was pressed into service to write the hymn for the Ludi Saeculares and the fourth book of *Odes*. He became a more straightforward but much less effective propagandist. Propertius' early poetry was not in any way public-spirited and highly unsympathetic to Augustus' reforms; nonetheless, Maecenas saw his potential and he came to write in support of Augustus, without changing so completely as to alienate his readers. By the last decade of the reign, Ovid, who had never written anything so opposed to Augustan attitudes as Propertius, could not be tolerated and was sent into a harsh exile.

This is evidence for a view of Augustus quite different from Seneca's. It can be argued that, while Augustus certainly acted with ruthlessness in his early career, it was justified because Rome and the Empire had fallen into anarchy and harsh measures were needed so that order could be restored and a proper system of government set up. However, as the Principate took root and, from an objective point of view, the dangers to public order became less, Augustus actually became less tolerant of dissent. In this view, Augustus' great political achievement was to give direction to the state and restore proper government; his great political failure was to allow the justified fears that remained from the era of civil war to harden into paranoia, and to tighten

control of political thought and action at a time when it should have been relaxed. If this view is right, two conclusions are possible. Either Augustus in his old age had fallen under the influence of the less tolerant Tiberius, or, if the development reflects a change in Augustus himself, he cannot be excused some responsibility for the harshness of the reigns of the notorious emperors who followed him: Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero.

Architecture and morality

There was constant competition among leading Romans to leave their mark on the city. Eye-catching new constructions were of course frequent, but in a culture obsessed by the idea of tradition there could be even more glory in reconstructing the great buildings of the past.

The Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus (Jupiter the Best and Greatest) was burned to the ground in 82, along with the very ancient terracotta statue of Jupiter. Sulla started the work of restoration; Catulus completed it in 69 and inscribed his name on the new temple. The two optimates did a magnificent job: Sulla used columns he had taken from the Olympieion temple in Athens; the new temple was considerably higher than the old one, and the roof was gilded and supported on giant carved eagles. Sulla also rebuilt and raised the height of the Senate House, in keeping with his political views.

At the same time that he took over the job of restoring the Temple of Jupiter, in 78, Catulus built, in the low saddle of the Capitoline Hill, the Tabularium (State Record Office). It is typical of Republican Rome that such an important bureaucratic building was mostly paid for by an individual, though authorised by a decree of the Senate.

In 52, Curio built, for games honouring his father, two theatres in the traditional D shape, back-to-back. After the shows, the theatres were rotated to create a single oval amphitheatre, which was immediately filled with gladiators. Curio was not very rich, and was not yet even a tribune. Writing in the first century AD, Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* 118) was amazed at the recklessness of the Roman people sitting in this rickety contraption, but, as Favro (1996: 24) notes, there was so much danger in the Rome of 52 that they probably felt they might as well enjoy the thrill.

Once Caesar, thanks to his campaigns in Gaul, began to change from being Rome's greatest debtor to its richest man, he started construction of the Basilica Julia in the Forum, which replaced the earlier Basilica Sempronia. A *basilica* was a place to conduct both business and law, its multiple uses due to the fact that it was in origin simply 'an enclosure that was a roofed extension of the Forum, intended to permit the businessmen, politicians and lawyers to conduct their business in any kind of weather' (Stambaugh 1988: 111). He was competing with Aemilius Lepidus Paullus, who in 55 had begun to restore the Basilica Aemilia by the Senate House, built by his ancestors. Caesar won hands down: not only was his *basilica* more sophisticated, but in 50 Paullus started to struggle financially and Caesar bailed him out, so he got the credit for both buildings.

At the same time (the late 50s), Faustus Sulla, son of the dictator and son-in-law of Pompey, was restoring the Comitium where the People assembled, so demonstrating that the optimates were actively helping the People's deliberations and decisions. The *popularis* Caesar was not to be outdone. He

planned to replace the old wooden voting enclosure for elections in the Campus Martius, officially called the Saepta but known as the Ovile (Sheep Pen), with a huge colonnaded structure made of marble. (In the event, Lepidus put the colonnades up after 43, and the whole rebuilding was finished by Agrippa in 26. It is one example among many of the competition among powerful men in the years following Caesar's death to complete the building projects that he had begun.) He also made further improvements to the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, replacing the name of the optimate Catulus with his own.

Caesar restored the Rostra, the speakers' platforms, and moved them from the side of the Senate House to the centre of the Forum, a splendidly *popularis* statement (Stambaugh 1988: 44). In a gesture that was appropriate to a place where free speech was practised, he allowed statues of Sulla and Pompey to be set up, a move for which he gave Antony the credit.

Caesar had further ambitions. He planned a new Senate House which would bear his name (the Curia Julia). He also bought land behind this new Senate House (using Cicero as an agent: *ad Att.* 4.16). Perhaps his original intention was just to extend the Forum Romanum (the original Forum), but by the 40s he had decided to build a separate enclosure forming the new Forum of Caesar. A hill was removed to create a level surface. This was not, like most forums, primarily a market place, although it contained shops, but, from the beginning, a centre for public business and the law (Appian 2.102). Another distinctive feature of this new Forum, as Favro (1996: 71–2) has pointed out, is that it is self-contained, almost invisible from the Forum Romanum and a quiet, ordered space in which the visitor could forget the chaos of the city. Instead of competing with others by constructing his buildings next to theirs, in this Forum Caesar blocked out everyone else and brought the visitor into an area devoted solely to him. On 26 September 46, he dedicated the new Forum and the Temple of Venus Genetrix, which he had vowed to build before the Battle of Pharsalus. Venus was the ancestor of both the Roman race in general and the Julian family in particular, so this temple, and the building of a Forum named after Caesar and creating much-needed extra public space for the Romans, identified Caesar with Rome itself.

One part of this identification was the connection that Caesar made between himself and his ancestor Romulus, son of Mars and founder of Rome. He bought gardens on the Quirinal Hill near the Temple of Quirinus, the name given to Romulus when he became a god after death. In 45, the Senate placed a statue of Caesar in this temple, and another on the Capitol near statues of Romulus and Rome's other kings.

The immediate consequence of Caesar's murder for construction work in Rome was that there was renewed competition among individual politicians. Their buildings, as was traditional, were paid for out of the spoils of military campaigns. Plancus, after victory in Gaul in 43, rebuilt the Temple of Saturn in the Forum. After his victory in Spain in 36, Domitius Calvinus rebuilt the

Regia, the offices of the *pontifex maximus* next to the Temple of Vesta: this housed an ancient sacred shield, was supposed to have been the home of King Numa, and was, of course, closely associated with the previous *pontifex maximus*, Caesar. Statilius Taurus followed his Triumph for victory in Africa in 34 with the building of a stone amphitheatre in the Campus Martius. Cornelius Balbus, the last man outside the imperial family to get a Triumph, for victory in Africa in 19, is also a late representative of this tradition: he built a theatre in the Campus Martius, dedicated in 13. Augustus dedicated the Theatre of Marcellus shortly afterwards; it was nearly twice the size.

On 1 January 42, the newly appointed Triumvirs established a state cult to Divus Julius and ordered the building of a temple to Caesar on the site in the Forum where his body had been burned on a funeral pyre. In 29, with Antony dead and Lepidus in disgrace, just three days after his triple Triumph, Augustus dedicated this temple, to advertise that he was the son of a god and to commemorate his avenging of Caesar's murder. It was in a very prominent location: for those entering the Forum from the north, it was the farthest building that could be seen, blocking the view to the south. Attached to the Temple of the Divine Julius was a second set of Rostra. Like the original Rostra outside the Senate House, it was decorated with ships' prows, in this case from the ships captured at Actium, so it commemorated Augustus' military victory; it was close to the column set up in his honour in 36, covered with ships' prows captured from Sextus Pompey. Like the rebuilding of the Senate House, which had also been ordered by the Triumvirs and which he had also finally completed that year, it indicated that he was restoring and creating places where normal political life could resume.

In 28, the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine was dedicated, in thanks for victory at Actium. This was right next to Augustus' house on the Palatine Hill; he mentions it second of all his building works (*Res Gestae* 19.1); the poet Propertius celebrates it (2.31, 4.6.1–14). Augustus' house was already carefully connected with the gods: it was next to a Temple of Victory and the Temple of Magna Mater, a goddess from Asia who, on being brought to Rome in the third century, had helped the Romans to defeat Hannibal. It was near what was supposed to be the hut of the city's original founder, Romulus (although there was another alleged Hut of Romulus on the Capitol), and on the slope below it was the cave in which he and his brother Remus had been suckled by a she-wolf. Such a complex of buildings could be interpreted as like those of the Hellenistic monarchs of the Eastern Mediterranean – such as Cleopatra – in which gods and kings lived together. However, as Favro has pointed out (1996: 100, 303), Augustus avoided this danger by declaring much of the area public land and by the attractively modest appearance of his house.

The story of another Temple of Apollo gives an indication of how things changed after Augustus' victory in the civil war. Antony's supporter Sosius, voted a Triumph in 34 for victory in Judaea, used his booty to rebuild a

Temple of Apollo in the south-west Campus Martius, along the route taken by triumphing generals. Clearly this was meant to compete with Augustus' new temple, but after Sosius had been captured at Actium and released, he showed his gratitude to his new master by making the friezes on his own Temple of Apollo represent not his own defeat of the Jews but Augustus' defeat of the Illyrians (Favro 1996: 91). So a temple that had been planned as a rival to Augustus' temple on the Palatine Hill became another monument to Augustus' glory.

In spite of the triple Triumph and extraordinary burst of building work in 29–28, we have seen that at this time Augustus was trying to present himself as simply the state's leading man, a magistrate of the Roman Senate and People rather than a king. However, it is worth noting that in 28 his Mausoleum was completed – a tomb, with his statue on it, intended for himself and his family, the largest in the Roman world and the nearest thing any Roman had ever built to the pyramids of the Egyptian pharaohs. In this case the desire to rival the royal families of the East seems to have been greater than the desire to preserve Roman Republican modesty; but it did announce Augustus' intention of being buried in Rome, not in Alexandria as Antony had wanted.

In the Pantheon, begun by Agrippa in 35, the year after the defeat of Sextus Pompey, and dedicated in 27, there were many statues of the gods, including Mars, Venus and the Divine Julius. There were statues of Agrippa and Augustus in the porch; this avoided the suggestion that they were themselves gods – instead, they were shown as gatekeepers. (Agrippa's name over the door of this great temple is now his most visible remain, but the Pantheon that now stands was built by Hadrian in the second century AD: it does not have a single stone, or even its design, in common with Agrippa's building, which burned down twice.)

In 22, Augustus dedicated the Temple of Jupiter the Thunderer on the Capitol, next to the most important temple in Rome, that of Jupiter Best and Greatest. The original temple to Jupiter the Thunderer was thought to be the earliest in Rome, built by Romulus as a place to dedicate his *spolia opima*. The work on the temple, allegedly inspired by Augustus nearly being hit by lightning in Spain in 26/25, was part of Augustus' strategy of associating himself closely with the *spolia opima*, even though he had not personally been awarded them, and excluding other generals from association with this supreme award for bravery.

Technically speaking, then, this was a restoration, but the temple had been so neglected that the rebuilding was complete and the temple, in effect, new; Augustus claimed it as a new building in *Res Gestae* 19.2. The care that had to be taken to ensure that such buildings did not seem to take away from, rather than enhance, the respect due to more ancient cults and temples is shown by Suetonius' anecdote (*Augustus* 90–1) that Augustus was disturbed by a dream in which Jupiter Best and Greatest complained that the new

temple was taking worshippers from him; Augustus replied that Jupiter the Thunderer was merely the gatekeeper for Jupiter Best and Greatest and, after the dream, hung a bell on the Temple of Jupiter the Thunderer, like the bells that hung in the doorways of houses. The story may well have been put out by Augustus himself to answer criticism of his building a temple so close to Jupiter Best and Greatest. It was still the case that those climbing the Capitol reached the Temple of Jupiter the Thunderer first, while the ringing bell only drew even more attention to it.

The Basilica Aemilia burned down in 14, and was rebuilt largely with Augustus' money; but Augustus allowed the rebuilding to be done in the name of Aemilius, a descendant of the man who had first built it. Augustus won by this and similar acts a reputation for generosity and unselfishness, and Aemilius as a client. He may also have ensured that the expense of the future upkeep of the building went to Aemilius and not him (Favro 1996: 304). This was not only a way of saving himself money; it was a way of showing that the greatness of the Princeps did not abolish either individual family honour or individual family responsibility. The Basilica Julia also burned down; Augustus built an enlarged version, which he dedicated in AD 12 in the names of Gaius and Lucius Caesar (*Res Gestae* 20.3).

Another restoration project is, on the surface, surprising. Augustus did rebuilding work on the complex of the Temple of Venus Victrix, Theatre of Pompey and Pompey's Curia in the Campus Martius. This was Pompey's greatest monument in Rome, and Pompey's Curia was where Caesar had been assassinated. The conspirators had planned that Caesar should fall at the feet of the statue of Pompey in the building, covered with blood, as if Pompey were taking revenge for his defeat in the civil war. Augustus tried to wipe that from public memory by moving the statue of Pompey to an arch opposite the main entrance to the theatre (Suetonius, *Augustus* 31). The Triumvirs had already closed the Curia, to avoid its becoming a shrine to the conspirators, and built a toilet over it (Dio 47.19). Having purged the site of its associations with Caesar's murder, Augustus restored it at great expense. While continuing carefully to show *pietas* towards his adoptive father, he was subtly detaching himself from the memory of Caesar's dictatorship. At the same time, he was beginning to associate himself with Pompey, who was remembered with great affection, particularly among those with Republican views. Augustan propaganda represented Sextus Pompey as an unworthy son of Pompey the Great; while his father had cleared the seas of pirates, Sextus was a pirate himself (*Res Gestae* 25.1, although Sextus is not mentioned by name). Now, with astonishing chutzpah, Augustus, whose political career was based upon being Caesar's son, hinted that he might in some ways be considered as a fitting son for Pompey. In Tiberius' reign, the Emperor rebuilt the theatre after a fire and justified taking responsibility for what should have been a family concern by saying that no descendant of Pompey was able to take care of the restoration (Tacitus, *Annals* 3.72). Even if Augustus never said anything

similar, his actions conveyed the same message.

In 13, Augustus dedicated the Theatre of Marcellus, named for his dead nephew and son-in-law, holding a festival at which his grandson and adopted son, Gaius, took part in the horse-riding tournament known as the 'Troy game'. In the same year, the Ara Pacis Augustae (Altar of Augustan Peace) started to be built. It was a little way south of the mausoleum, exactly one mile from the line of the *pomerium*, at the point where a magistrate had to lay down his military *imperium*: that is, on the border between home and abroad, war and peace (Favro 1996: 129; Galinsky 1996: 142). Augustus states that the Senate decreed its construction 'when I returned from Spain and Gaul after successfully settling the affairs of those provinces' (*Res Gestae* 12.2), just before he mentions the closing of the doors of Janus 'whenever peace had been secured by victories' (*Res Gestae* 13). Augustus had entered Rome quietly and refused a Triumph; this building was his way of celebrating victory on this occasion because it commemorated the peace won through strength (Galinsky 1996: 141–2), not peace and love.

The side facing the road (the Via Lata) represented Rome (sitting on a pile of weapons), Venus and Tellus, the goddess of the Earth, making the standard connection between peace and fertility; the carving on the west side showed scenes connected with the origins of Rome and the history of the Julian family, with depictions of Mars, Romulus and Remus and Aeneas; the other panels showed religious processions involving senators and members of the royal family, including Agrippa, who was dead and buried in the mausoleum by the time the altar was dedicated in 9. It is likely that these scenes relate to Augustus becoming *pontifex maximus*. The altar links the private mausoleum with the city of Rome. For example, on the west side Aeneas sacrifices to the gods on landing in Italy; around the corner on the south side Augustus is sacrificing.

Many of Augustus' building projects demanded admiration for their sheer size, but the Ara Pacis relied for its effect on its position and its carving. In keeping with its scale, it has some intimate touches such as children holding their parents' hands or tugging on their clothes, such as were found on private funerary carvings; Augustus and his family are humans among other humans, not elevated above them (Galinsky 1996: 150, 155). Yet it forms part of a huge monumental complex. While the altar was under construction, in 10, Augustus set up just to the west of it a pink granite obelisk from Egypt. Obelisks were symbolic of the sun's rays for the Egyptians, and it was brought to Rome in commemoration of Augustus' victory over Egypt and in honour of the sun god Apollo: it formed the *gnomon* (pointer) of a giant sundial. (Augustus set up another obelisk on the *spina* at the centre of the Circus Maximus.) It is likely that on 23 September, Augustus' birthday, the shadow cast by the obelisk pointed to the Ara Pacis (Galinsky 1996: 146).

The example of Caesar's will, in which he had shown his generosity and care for the Roman people, was carefully followed. Agrippa had not been too

proud to give his name to a two-storey warehouse building between the Forum and the docks on the Tiber, the *Horrea Agrippiana*. When he died in 12, he left to the people his gardens and baths; he even left some estates of his that brought in revenue to Augustus so that Augustus could use the money to maintain the baths and allow free entrance to them. In 7, Augustus made the whole of the ‘*Campus Agrippae*’ (the area in the middle of the *Campus Martius* where Agrippa’s building projects were concentrated) public property, and completed another project undertaken by Agrippa for the public benefit: the *Diribitorium*, the office where voters’ ballots were sorted. The building was admired for its great roof, which had the largest single span of any building then in existence (Dio 55.8); Caesar’s voting pen next to it had no roof at all.

In 7, Tiberius began repairs to the Temple of Concord in the Forum, inscribing his name and that of Nero Drusus on it; the rebuilt temple was dedicated on 16 January AD 10. This building was the closest of all temples to the Senate House and the Plebeian Assembly. It was first built to celebrate harmony between the Senate and the People; the message was that the imperial family were now ensuring harmony and peace within the Empire – 7 was also the year of Tiberius’ German triumph – and the state (Aicher 2004: 94). However, the associations of this temple are double-edged: it had been rebuilt by Opimius, the consul of 121 who had ordered the killing of Gaius Gracchus, and it was at a meeting of the Senate in this temple that Cicero delivered the fourth speech against Catiline, securing senatorial support for his execution. Levick (1976: 36–7) argues that Tiberius was giving a sign of his optimate views. It should be noted, however, that Tiberius chose the anniversary of the day on which Caesar Octavian took the name Augustus to rededicate the temple, which associates it closely with the Principate. It is likely that Tiberius could present the temple in one way to those with Republican sympathies and in another way to supporters of the regime.

Tiberius also joined with his mother, Augustus’ wife, in dedicating the Portico of Livia. There was symbolism in this too, since this public building stood on the site of a private mansion that had belonged to the notoriously extravagant, self-indulgent and cruel Vedius Pollio, who allegedly tried to feed a slave to his fish when the slave broke one of his goblets (Seneca the Younger, *On Anger* 3.40.2–4; Dio 54.23). Livia herself dedicated another Temple of Concord, a gift to Augustus that stood as a public monument of the harmony of their marriage, within the Portico (Ovid, *Fasti* 6.637–48). Another building project of Livia (also recorded in *Fasti* 5.157–8) was the restoration of the Temple of Bona Dea (‘the Good Goddess’) on the Aventine. This was not only a suitable thing for a respectable Roman matron to do. It reminded people of one of the great scandals of Republican Rome, when Clodius allegedly slipped into Caesar’s house wearing women’s clothes to spy on the festival of the Bona Dea, at which only women were allowed. The restoration sent out several messages. The favour of the gods was being sought for Rome;

no gross disrespect such as Clodius had shown would be tolerated. In general, loose cannons such as Clodius had no part in the new Rome. The new *pontifex maximus*, Caesar's son, would have no such humiliations such as Caesar himself had suffered that night. And, while the dishonour to the goddess and suspicion of adultery with Clodius had forced Caesar to divorce his wife Pompeia, Augustus' wife, far from embarrassing her husband, was not only correct in her behaviour towards the Bona Dea but was doing the goddess special honour.

On 27 January AD 7, Tiberius dedicated the rebuilt Temple of Castor and Pollux, whose restoration he had paid for from spoils from his war in Germany (Suetonius, *Tiberius* 20), in his own name and that of Nero Drusus. The gods Castor and Pollux were warrior brothers, and the restored temple reminded the people of Tiberius' military achievements and associated him with his fondly remembered brother. The dedication also advertised Tiberius' new status within the royal family, since Tiberius gave himself the last name Claudianus rather than using his original second name Claudius (Dio 55.27); the name had changed because of his adoption by Augustus.

A favoured type of building in the time of Augustus was the triumphal arch. In Republican times down to the murder of Caesar the Romans had built fewer than six arches; in the Triumviral and Augustan periods at least eight were built (Favro 1996: 157). They are the perfect example of building as propaganda: they have no usable interior or practical function; they exist only to make a statement. The Parthian Arch in the Forum, set up between the Temple of the Divine Julius and the Temple of Castor and Pollux to commemorate the return of the standards from Parthia in 19, was part of the attempt to present a diplomatic success as a military victory. It also associated Augustus personally with all Rome's political and military successes, because the list of past consuls (*fasti consulares*) and the list of the Triumphators (*fasti triumphales*), starting from Romulus, were carved on its sides.

The Forum of Augustus, dedicated in 2, is at right angles to the Forum of Caesar, and clearly connects Augustus with his adoptive father. It is asymmetrical: there is no north-east corner, the forum being cut off at a diagonal. This makes a display of Augustus' unwillingness to build over the public street behind it and evict private citizens from their houses (Suetonius, *Augustus* 56), part of his emphasis that he did not exploit the power of the state in building his forum, but used his private money to buy up private land, creating a public amenity with his personal resources (Galinsky 1996: 198). The forum is dominated by the Temple of Mars Ultor (the Avenger), built to commemorate the defeat of Caesar's murderers and the return of Roman standards from Parthia.

For centuries, generals celebrating Triumphs had set up victory monuments, many by the Porta Triumphalis, the gate in the south-west of the Campus Martius through which triumphal processions passed. These commemorated individual glory while inspiring new generations of Romans

to match their ancestors' achievements. The Forum of Augustus now became a single focal point for Rome's military life and past achievements. After the dedication of the Forum of Augustus, all boys of the upper class who had come of age and so reached the age of military service had to present themselves at the Temple of Mars Ultor to put on their adult clothing, the *toga virilis*: Lucius Caesar had been the first to do so; commanders setting out on expeditions had to start from there; victories were celebrated there; any time a Roman army lost its standards and they were later recovered, they were to be placed there; meetings of the Senate to discuss questions of war would be held there; statues in honour of successful generals were placed in the Forum.

Along the sides of the Forum are two long colonnades; at the ends by the temple, the walls bulge out in semicircles (*exhedrae*). Both colonnades and *exhedrae* were filled on one side with men of the Julian family, starting with Aeneas and on the other with statues of famous Romans from a variety of families. The placing of all these statues within his own Forum associates Augustus with Rome itself. The curved areas with their sculptures resembled the curved niches for statues of ancestors in private houses (Favro 1996: 126; Stambaugh 1988: 55 suggests that the Forum is like the *atrium* of a house, where the *paterfamilias* receives guests). The idea that the whole of Rome was Augustus' home and family was further developed by the connection between the new Forum and the worship of the *lares compitales* and *genius Augusti*. The priestly college of the *fratres Arvales* met in this Forum every year to hold ceremonies in honour of both Mars and the spirits of the family of Augustus.

The symbolism was even clearer at Augustus' funeral in AD 14, when in the procession were carried not only images of Augustus' own ancestors, as was normal in an aristocrat's funeral, but of many famous Romans. Pompey was prominent among them, just as his statue was prominent in the Forum of Augustus; this was pushing further the association that Augustus had started by restoring the Temple of Venus Victrix and the Theatre of Pompey. The occasion shows the interconnection of spectacle, literature and architecture in the propaganda of Augustus, as well as the continuity achieved by Augustus' clarity of vision and exceptional patience: the ordering echoed the arrangement of the procession in Virgil's *Aeneid* 6, written in the late 20s, and of the statues in the Forum of Augustus dedicated in 2 (Stambaugh 1988: 253). Augustus was stretching the idea contained in the title Father of the Country (*pater patriae*) further than any other politician would ever have dared: he was *paterfamilias* not only of the Julian family but of the whole of Rome, so that any distinguished Roman counted as one of his own ancestors – even one who had fought against his adoptive father in a civil war.

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URBI

Running the city

Public spaces

In their physical surroundings, as in their politics and morality, the Romans showed great concern with maintaining the best of the past. It has already been noted that politicians were at least as concerned to be seen doing restoration work as new building projects. There was, indeed, a constant need for repair. Buildings were frequently struck by lightning, something which is often recorded in our sources, especially Dio, because it was regarded as an omen; the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitol was repeatedly hit. There were other dangers too, particularly fire and flooding (see below).

Great trouble was taken to preserve traditions, some very ancient. Sacred geese continued to be kept at the Temple of Juno Moneta on the Capitol, in memory of the geese that were said to have woken up the Romans when the Gauls attempted to capture the hill in 390. The Romans kept repairing the small thatched hut on the Palatine said to have been Romulus' first home. One of the oldest structures in Rome, the Pons Sublicius, which crossed the Tiber near the Circus Maximus, was made entirely of wood; it did not even have iron pins. As a result, it was repeatedly swept away by the flooding of the Tiber, but the Romans refused to modernise it, and replaced it every time with another all-wooden structure.

Religious buildings were everywhere. There were shrines and temples in every public space in the city. What we would think of, in a distinction alien to the Roman way of thinking, as the sacred and the secular existed side by side. The state treasury was kept in the Temple of Saturn in the Forum, which was therefore surrounded by armed guards; the state records were kept there too, until the Tabularium was built in 78. A statue of Cloacina, goddess of the sewers, stood in the Forum, showing both that for the Romans, as for other ancient peoples, there was divinity in everything and that the Romans took justified pride in things that more sensitive cultures might have been inclined to hide away.

Similarly, the boundaries between private and public and between commercial and state business were blurred. Important families conducted funerals in the Forum; gladiatorial contests, which were also held there, originally formed part of funeral ceremonies for individuals. Basilicas were buildings where business transactions took place, but they also housed law courts.

Some public buildings and public spaces, however, including some of the largest, were strictly commercial, without any civic or political function. There were warehouses all over the city, many in very visible places – by the Forum, between the river and the Aventine, even at the foot of the Palatine, blocking its grand houses from view. By the Tiber, close to the Circus Maximus, was the trading area of the Forum Boarium, which supplied food and other goods to the city dwellers, who numbered a million by the time of

Augustus. Just to its north was the fish market, the Forum Piscarium, and a little further north again was the vegetable market, the Forum Holitorium.

The 'city proper' was in one sense very clearly distinguished from the areas around it. The whole of the centre of the city was a sacred space, enclosed by a boundary, the *pomerium*, within which there could be no bodies buried, no foreign cults worshipped, and traditionally no soldiers except those taking part in a Triumph, although this rule was repeatedly broken and was no longer observed at all after the late 50s.

North-west of the area enclosed by the *pomerium* was the Campus Martius, named after the god of war, Mars. This was a large flood plain and the traditional area for soldiers to train. Throughout the late Republic and, especially, the reign of Augustus it increasingly filled with public buildings. It retained, however, a very particular character, keeping its connection with foreign and military affairs. Ambassadors gathered there; armies were levied and set out from the area. Those magistrates who could wield *imperium*, a form of power that included military authority, were elected in the Campus Martius by the *comitia centuriata*. This assembly was itself a gathering of citizens in their military units, while the assemblies that met in the Forum, the *comitia tributa* and *concilium plebis*, had no connection with the army: they were divided into tribes, which were originally geographical units.

There was a wall, not quite following the line of the *pomerium* throughout (for example, the Aventine Hill was outside the *pomerium* but inside the wall), but close to it. It was supposedly built by King Servius in the sixth century; in reality, it dated from the fourth century. It was decayed, but still provided a visible sign of the divide between the city and its suburbs. However, very many 'city dwellers' lived outside this wall, and there was significance in the fact that there was no wall that enclosed the whole built-up area. The Spartans, whom the Romans admired, had not had any wall at all, and the fact that the edges of the urban area of Rome were surrounded by fields signalled that the Romans, like the Spartans, felt that they could rely on their fighting prowess and not on physical fortifications to protect themselves. It also gave the impression that Rome had no bounds – it could expand forever.

In fact, not all of Rome was surrounded by farms. Bordering the city to the north and East were the gardens of various extremely wealthy men, to which there was often some degree of public access, and which might be left to the people after their deaths. One hill north of the Quirinal, called in later times the Pincian, was known in this period as the Hill of Gardens. Among them were the gardens to which Lucullus retired in the 60s after losing his political fight with Pompey, devoting himself to gazing at exotic fish and indulging in other luxurious pleasures. His reputation did not improve. In the 40s and 30s another man forced into premature retirement from politics, the historian Sallust, laid out his own gardens on the Quirinal Hill; this did nothing to stop the rumours that he had stolen great quantities of money when he was

governor of Africa Nova. Maecenas did better for his public image with his gardens to the East of the Esquiline Hill, also created in the 30s, because he reclaimed the land: it had been a smelly and disease-ridden area that had functioned as a cemetery for paupers and their pets and a dumping-ground for rubbish (Horace, *Satires* 1.8; excavators in the nineteenth century found bodily remains underneath the gardens ‘reduced to a uniform mass of black, unctuous matter’—Aicher 2004: 186). The Gardens of Maecenas included Rome’s first warm water swimming pool. The huge increase in the water supply under Augustus made it easier to maintain these lavish gardens.

By the late Republic, Rome had many fine individual buildings. But the Romans were beginning to appreciate that a city is more than a collection of random elements. Although the individual men who had built the public buildings were often subsidised with public money, the state had not been using a guiding hand to produce any unified scheme. The architect Vitruvius, writing in the second half of the first century BC, emphasised the need for order and planning. He knew that on this issue his thoughts were shared by the emperor Augustus, to whom he dedicated his book. Vitruvius’ contemporary Livy wrote, ‘the city looks like one that has been occupied rather than one that has been properly planned’ (5.55). Every small locality within Rome had its deity, the *genius loci*, but, although Greeks and other Italians were making images of the goddess Roma by the second century, the Romans themselves did not start worshipping her as a personification of the whole city until the very end of the Republic (Favro 1996: 49–50, 291–2).

Roman senators, *equites* and ordinary soldiers were travelling to the Eastern Mediterranean and seeing great cities such as Antioch, Pergamum and Alexandria, full of vast and impressive buildings and carefully planned under the influence of single rulers or dynasties. Rome was unimpressive in comparison to these metropolises; even smaller cities closer to Rome such as Capua or Syracuse were more attractive.

Sulla showed some signs of an overall vision for Rome when he became dictator in 81. This is shown by his restoration of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus; by his supporter Catulus’ building of the Tabularium, which marked the end of the Forum with a large, magnificent and regular building and hid the irregular dip in the Capitol (the ‘saddle’ between the two summits, the Capitolium and the Arx); by providing new, raised paving in the central area of the Forum; by rebuilding the Senate House; by improving the roads; and by enlarging the *pomerium* (Favro 1996: 56–7; for his blending of Roman and Greek elements, anticipating Augustus, see Stambaugh 1988: 40). However, the briefness of his period in power limited the effectiveness of his measures.

The transformation of Rome from a city of brick to a city of marble started in Caesar’s time. He opened the quarries of white marble in Italy at Luni (Carrara), using it for the Temple of Venus Genetrix (Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* 1.81), and began large-scale importation of marble. His chief engineer,

Mamurra, was the first individual in Rome to make extensive use of marble in building his own home, in the 40s.

At the beginning of Augustus' reign there was still little unity in Roman building projects. Two temples of Apollo whose building was completed at the beginning of the 20s BC demonstrate this; one in the Campus Martius, built by Sosius, was Greek in style and built of marble, while the other on the Palatine, built by Augustus, was archaic with Italic elements, and its reliefs were made of terracotta. When Augustus emerged as the acknowledged leader of Rome and, unlike Sulla or Caesar, went on to remain in power for decades, he had the opportunity to create a unified style of public building. However, it was not easy to arrive at such a style: the contrast between the two temples of Apollo echoed a tension within Augustus himself. He wished to restore the virtues of the antique Romans, but also, having rejected Antony's alleged plans to make another city the capital of the empire, to transform Rome into a visually sophisticated city that could rival the great Greek metropolises of the East.

So there was no sweeping and radical redesign of the kind done in Paris by Baron Haussmann in the late nineteenth century on the orders of Napoleon III. The architecture of the Augustan Age was not innovative, either artistically or in the use of materials. The streets in Rome remained irregular and the most ancient places of the Forum were untouched. However, gardens sprang up over the Campus Martius, the Theatre of Marcellus matched the great theatres of the East, and public libraries were established in the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine and in the Porticus Octaviae. Greek masons were imported to help create many new buildings of coloured marble. The new Forums of Caesar and Augustus, unlike the Forum Romanum, were spacious, with large, mainly empty courtyards in front of the temples of Venus Genetrix and Mars Ultor. Buildings in these large spaces, but also those squeezed into the middle of the crowded city, rose to great heights: the columns on Sosius' Temple of Apollo were 15 m high, those on the Temple of Mars Ultor 17.7 m; the podia of the Temple of Divus Julius reached 6 m in total (Favro 1996: 150–1). But, while encouraging and himself funding great public buildings, Augustus wished to preserve a sense of modesty, for example in limiting the heights of buildings on residential and shopping streets, a measure that also showed concern for safety, given the flimsy foundations of most structures.

In 27, Augustus had a section of the Via Flaminia, which went from Rome to Ariminum on the East coast of Italy, repaired at his own expense, and directed those senators who had recently celebrated Triumphs to use their booty to fund repairs to other roads outside the city walls. Valerius Messalla rebuilt a section of the Via Latina but, although some glory could be had by erecting statues of oneself along the routes (as Augustus himself did), this was a less attractive option for a Triumphator than setting up public buildings within Rome. In any case, over the next decade Augustus stopped allowing generals outside his family to triumph.

In 22, Augustus was made commissioner for all the roads around Rome, and appointed a group of ex-praetors (the *curatores viarum*) to supervise construction work (Dio 54.8). This was a useful occupation for the many praetors who would never become consuls. Augustus helped to make it prestigious as well by giving them lictors, the attendants assigned to magistrates. The increase in status for this job was significant: previously, the only officials in charge of the roads outside the city had been two of the twenty-six most junior magistrates at the very beginning of their senatorial careers (Dio 54.26).

In the triumviral and Augustan periods, alongside the great public buildings set up by the Emperor himself, his supporters and his family, there were buildings constructed to house or honour wealthy and influential individuals, such as we are familiar with from Pompeii. In the 30s, a rich baker, the freedman Vergilius Eurysaces, had a tomb built on the edge of the city, full of visual references to his profession: granaries and ovens. He intended to make his name last, and he has succeeded beyond his wildest dreams. It is also on the edge of the city that, along with the great gardens, the grandest private buildings are to be found. On the right bank of the Tiber, opposite the Baths of Agrippa in the Campus Martius, dating to the 20s, are the remains of a villa underneath the Renaissance Villa Farnesina, with room in its grounds for bathing, exercising and performing. However, as Augustus made clear his wish that private buildings should be modest, a view obediently echoed by the poets (Horace, *Odes* 3.1.41–6, 2.18; Propertius 3.2.11), and as it became more dangerous to compete openly with the Princeps and his family within the city, even the suburbs of Rome began to seem unsuitable places for great houses, and rich Romans increasingly made their displays of wealth in country villas.

Living spaces

Outside the large public squares, Rome was a little gloomy: smoke from wood fires, the plastered walls of private buildings, their porous foundations made of tufa and their decorations of unglazed terracotta, all blackened by the same cooking fires, absorbed much of the light. In poorer areas like the Subura, buildings were tall and streets were narrow (Favro 1996: 28, 176 – she compares the experience of moving from the Subura into the multi-coloured marble and metal of the Forum of Augustus to Dorothy's experience in entering Oz). Across the Tiber on the western bank, it was even worse: the clouds of smoke were darker here because of the many factories, including tanneries. Many foreigners settled here, although there were some large houses built by the rich at the foot of the Janiculum Hill, like the Farnesina villa mentioned above, because, being right by the Tiber, they were very visible and an excellent way of showing off one's wealth (Cicero, *ad Att.* 12.19).

Walls were made of cheap unfired mud-brick, or timber frames filled with rubble. Naturally, they were highly flammable. Many buildings leaned, and then fell over. The stucco surfaces of many buildings were crumbling. Some Romans had even worse living conditions: leaning up against many buildings were shanties thrown up by the poor.

Nevertheless, we must remember the social mobility of the *plebs*, and recognise that the *insulae* (blocks of flats), though flimsy, were more comfortable than the dwellings of the rural poor. In almost all periods of history, urban poverty has been more visible than rural poverty but less extreme. The most basic measure is food: the *plebs urbana* had better bread than rural labourers, and plenty of wine.

In the early first century BC, Rome's streets were choked with traffic moving goods. The *lex Julia municipalis*, a law supposedly drafted by Caesar, passed by Mark Antony after Caesar's death, banned wheeled vehicles from the streets by day. This made moving around in the daytime much easier, but nights much noisier.

Inevitably, the attention of the most important political figures in Rome was taken up by city-wide projects such as the management of the River Tiber or great public buildings. There was a need for a political structure that would encourage better care of neighbourhoods and suburbs. The four urban tribal regions, created according to tradition by King Servius Tullius in the sixth century, did not even cover the whole area within the *pomerium* and clearly did not fulfil this purpose by the end of the first century BC, although some magistrates were still assigned by lot to look after the affairs of each 'tribe'. In 7, Augustus created fourteen new regions. These covered the whole of the actual city, half being inside and half outside the *pomerium*. They incorporated within them the existing wards of the city (*vici*), of which there

were around 265; this, at least, was the number in the time of Pliny the Elder nearly a century later.

The new regions were managed by magistrates chosen by lot from among the tribunes, aediles and praetors. Under them was an administrative system that predated Augustus' reforms: each ward was supervised by an unelected official and four elected *vicomagistri*. The *vicomagistri* were among a number of *magistri*, officials drawn from the more prosperous members of the *plebs urbana* – often freedmen. These officials included the *magistri Capitolini* and *magistri Luperci*, who were powerful enough to expel certain people, including *equites*, from Rome during the corn supply crisis of 56 (Cicero, *ad Q. frat.* 2.6). After his appointment as *pontifex maximus*, Augustus had raised the status of the *vicomagistri* by putting them in charge of the shrines to the *lares compitales* and the *genius Augusti*. Now they also became responsible for fire fighting and repairing the streets; they were given 600 slaves, who had previously worked for the aediles, to help them, and on certain days they could wear magistrates' clothes and be attended by lictors. This degree of devolution gave residents in each neighbourhood a feeling that they had a share in the running of the city.

Fire and water, law and order

As already noted, disasters in Rome were common. Favro (1996: 113) has a helpful table of storms, quakes, floods, fires, famines and plagues between 60 and AD 15.

Fires were frequent. This was not only because of the crowded wooden buildings. Sometimes they were the result of civil disturbance, like the one that raged through the Forum and the rest of the city after the murder of Clodius in January 52, burning down the Senate House.

From 23, after another major fire, the senior ('curule') aediles were given the task of putting out fires, previously the job of an obscure panel called the *tresviri nocturni* – this was no doubt to encourage ambitious men to take on this important responsibility, in the knowledge that their progress up the career ladder depended on their performing the task well. They were given 600 public slaves to help them. However, some neglected the task, while one, Egnatius Rufus, by following Augustus' example of using private resources for public benefit and employing his own slaves to put out fires, won so much popularity that he became dangerously powerful.

A fire burned down many of the buildings around the Forum in 7; it was thought to have been started deliberately by those who owned the buildings, mainly shopkeepers, who were in debt. It was in response to this that Augustus gave responsibility for fire fighting to the *vicomagistri*. However, the overall work force of 600 slaves was inadequate and the system, while ensuring local accountability, was too fragmented given that fires could spread over large areas. These shortcomings were brought home to Augustus when his own house burned down in AD 3. In response to another major fire in the city, in AD 6, Augustus recruited seven divisions each of 1,000 freedmen, the *vigiles*, military nightwatchmen whose primary duty was to respond to fires; each division was responsible for two of the fourteen regions and was commanded by a tribune, with an equestrian prefect in charge of the whole force. According to Dio (55.26), this was intended to be a temporary measure, but it may be that this was simply the line that Augustus took in public, knowing that senators might object to such an important job going to an equestrian, and that freeborn citizens might object to freedmen having the status of soldiers, particularly within Rome itself. In any event, the *vigiles* became a permanent institution, acting as night police as well as fire fighters.

There was a particularly devastating flood in 54. In 45, it was rumoured that, partly to lessen the risk of floods, and partly to increase the size of the Campus Martius, Caesar proposed to straighten the River Tiber and make it run along the foot of the Vatican and Janiculan Hills (Cicero, *ad Att.* 13.33.4, though he admitted that the source of this report, Capito, was a gossip). This radical proposal, if it ever existed, died with Caesar.

The River Tiber overflowed its banks again in 27, flooding the low-lying

areas of Rome (Dio 53.20–1). Inconveniently, this happened on the night of the day that Caesar Octavian had become Augustus; of necessity it had to be interpreted as a good omen. It happened again in 23, in 22 and 13 (Dio 53.33; 54.1; 54.25); on these occasions it had to be acknowledged as a disaster. In AD 5 (Dio 55.22), severe earthquakes caused the Tiber to rise and break down ‘the bridge’ (probably the bridges from Tiber Island); for seven days, Romans could sail around their city. In AD 12, the Tiber flooded the Circus Maximus and the Games of Mars had to be held in the Forum of Augustus.

In general, Augustus took care to maintain the Tiber as a waterway. He cleared the river of rubbish and removed the houses that projected into it (Suetonius, *Augustus* 30). In 7, he did work on the river banks. Suetonius (*Augustus* 37) mentions a position of commissioner for the channel of the Tiber. Augustus may have held this office himself, delegating power to assistants; the first permanent board with responsibility for the river was set up in the reign of Tiberius.

Agrippa’s careful repairs to the city’s drainage and sewers in 33 and maintenance afterwards made the whole city healthier. In particular, it made the development of the Campus Martius possible. In 43, Caesar’s artificial lake (*naumachia*) in the Campus Martius had to be covered over because it was a breeding ground for germs. Later, however, Agrippa’s own baths were built there and those who used them apparently suffered no ill health.

By his building of two new aqueducts and repairs to others in his aedileship of 33 and in the works of 19, Agrippa doubled the supply of water to Rome. As we have seen, he was appointed to the permanent post of *curator aquarum* after 33. At his death, he left his work force of 240 trained slaves to Augustus. In 11, the Senate created a board of overseers of the water supply, the *curatae aquarum*. This board, which took over the slave work force, had four members nominated by Augustus, the leader of whom, the *curator aquarum*, was appointed for life, although by a law of 9 he could delegate his responsibilities temporarily to an ex-praetor. Valerius Messalla was *curator aquarum* from 11 until he died in AD 8; there was, for some reason, a gap of five years before the next *curator*, Ateius Capito, took office in AD 13. Like the *curatores viarum*, the *curatores aquarum* dressed like magistrates and had lictors (Frontinus, *Aqueducts of Rome* 99–100). The aediles retained responsibility for the use of water in public games and for the upkeep of the public fountains.

How can we withhold our respect from a water system that, in the first century AD, supplied the city of Rome with substantially more water than was supplied in 1985 to New York City?

(Trevor Hodge, quoted by Robert Harris, epigraph to his novel *Pompeii*)

Fires and floods were not the only dangers in Rome. In the late Republic, even the apparently peaceful, and certainly relatively luxurious, dwellings of the rich on the Oppian and Palatine hills, were not safe. In 57, Clodius and his gang attacked first the workmen rebuilding Cicero's house, and then Milo's house on the Palatine; in the fighting, Clodius himself ended up hiding in Sulla's house near by (Cicero, *ad Att.* 4.3). As consul in 52, Pompey not only moved about with a bodyguard of soldiers, but set soldiers to patrol the streets (Dio 40.48, 53); this, however, was seen as a temporary emergency measure.

The writer Varro, at the start of Augustus' reign, complained about muggings in Rome in broad daylight (*On Agriculture* 1.69). Augustus' reinvention of the office of Prefect of the City, with the holder now in charge of a force of armed men, was one attempt to bring order into Rome. The three cohorts of urban guards patrolled the streets during the day and the *vigiles* at night. Augustus' Rome was undoubtedly safer than the Rome of the late Republic, but the fact that the nearest equivalents of a police force consisted of fully armed soldiers warns us not to be too naive about the expected levels of violence.

Bread and circuses

Although a great deal of work went on in Rome, many jobs were short-lived and many people suffered periods of unemployment. The population of Rome was very large for a pre-industrial city, and there was not enough work to go around. It would probably be wrong to think of there being a large class of people who were permanently unemployed, but there was a high level of unemployment at any given time and there was an ongoing need for support from the state. While the population was highly mobile, with rapid movement of people into and out of Rome and some people living part of the year in Rome and part elsewhere, the needs of those who were living in the city remained constant.

Augustus' ability to look after the *plebs* through his huge wealth was almost as important to his acquisition and retention of power as his control of the army. Many instances of his giving money or grain to the citizens of Rome have been mentioned, but there were many more. As he himself puts it (*Res Gestae* 18), from the year 18 'whenever tax revenues proved insufficient, I made grain and cash distributions from my granary and patrimony [money that he had inherited], sometimes to 100,000 people, sometimes to many more'—these emergency measures were in addition to the regular distributions mentioned below.

According to Dio (54.17 – dated to 18), Augustus established a commission of ex-praetors, selected by lot, to supervise the distribution of grain in Rome; there were four for a year, with each man taking charge for three months. This was a prestigious appointment: the ex-praetors had to have held their praetorships three years before, so that they were of the same age and qualifications as the consuls. As mentioned in [Chapter 16](#), many others were involved in supervising the supply and distribution of grain during his reign.

In the late Republic, from the time of Gaius Gracchus, a monthly ration of grain was sold at a subsidised rate. Clodius in 58 set up free distribution of five measures (*modii*) of grain per month, a substantial allowance though not enough to cover a family's needs, to anyone who could prove that he was a citizen who lived in Rome. Caesar limited the number eligible to receive grain to 150,000 in 46. From 30, Augustus gave hand-outs to all or nearly all of the *plebs*; but between 5 and 2 he restricted the number to 'a little over' 200,000 (*Res Gestae* 15.4). In 5, for the first time, he gave them 240 sesterces each (the yearly cost of the grain distributed – Cooley 2009: 172). This shift from the direct provision of food to the distribution of money parallels the change from giving land to retired soldiers to giving them a sum of money. Other financial support might be given: in AD 4, Augustus put aside 60 million sesterces to be used in giving interest-free loans for three years to everyone who needed it, according to Dio (55.12).

Often the *plebs* got something better than raw grain. The great public feast

was common in Rome. *Collegia* provided them for their members. Triumphant generals often arranged them as part of the celebrations of their victories. Naturally, Caesar's in the 40s were greater and more frequent than those of any previous general. But anyone with pretensions to social status might put on a smaller-scale version and invite the less fortunate. Patrons regularly gave their clients *sportula*, a little basket of food.

In the middle of Rome, one of the most densely populated cities in the history of the world, a huge open space was set aside for the chariot races. The Circus Maximus occupied the space between the Palatine and Aventine hills; according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (3.68), writing in the reign of Augustus, it could hold 150,000, much more than the theatres and amphitheatres of the time. The gladiatorial games attract our attention for their foreignness and brutality, but the vast capacity of the Circus Maximus suggests that the top sporting attraction in Rome was the races.

Outside the centre of the city, the broad plain of the Campus Martius easily accommodated large crowds, and spectacles were frequently mounted there. In 55, the Theatre of Pompey opened. This was the first time that a permanent, stone building had been created for theatrical shows, and there was controversy: Romans found theatre morally dubious, and while a temporary construction for festival times was acceptable, a structure that lasted all year round seemed a source of moral infection – especially when it was so large: this theatre could seat 11,000 people. In 58, Scaurus, Sulla's stepson, had built a theatre with a lower level of marble and a three-storey stage with 360 columns (according to the possibly exaggerated account of Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 36, 114–15), but even this impressive construction was dismantled, with Scaurus taking some of the columns back to his own house. (In this way he avoided both accusations of corrupting the masses by allowing a permanent theatre to stand, and restrictions on spending on private houses, since the columns had originally been used for the benefit of the public.) Even though theatres were usually built facing temples, with the gods coming out in statue form to attend performances, and Pompey maintained that tradition by attaching a temple to Venus Victrix at the top of the seating, not everyone was won over.

Games, associated with religious festivals, were an important element in the life of the neighbourhood and of the city. These became increasingly large-scale and spectacular from the time that Sulla put on *Ludi Victoriae Sullanae* to celebrate his victories; there came to be an expectation that the leading men in the state would put on huge, expensive shows. By the time of Caesar's death, fifty-nine days of the year were devoted to *ludi*.

Attempts to impress the public could misfire: the elephants that Pompey had imported for the games at the opening of the Theatre of Pompey in 55 broke down the railing separating the spectators from the arena and trampled the spectators (Pliny, *Natural History* 8.20), no doubt a story eagerly told, and perhaps exaggerated, by Pompey's enemies.

In 46, the year in which Julius Caesar celebrated five Triumphs, he paid for a stadium, a temporary amphitheatre for hunting shows and his *naumachia* for mock naval battles, as well as work on the Circus Maximus. This work was so extensive that Pliny the Elder, writing only 120 years later, describes the Circus as having been built by Caesar. Caesar's interest in games was nothing new: as aedile, he had gathered together such a huge troop of gladiators that a law had been passed limiting the number that any one man could keep in Rome; just before he crossed the Rubicon in 49, he had gone to a theatrical performance and inspected the plans of a gladiatorial school that he intended to build (Suetonius 10, 31).

In 30, the successful general Statilius Taurus completed an amphitheatre in the Campus Martius, for gladiator shows and staged beast hunts. This was the first stone amphitheatre to be built in Rome. It made him so popular that he was given the right to choose one of the praetors each year (Dio 51.23). (Syme 1939: 325, however, suggests that this was Augustus' reward to him for loyal service, rather than the people's decision.) In 25, the praetor Servilius put on a wild-beast show in which 300 bears and 300 animals from Africa were killed.

However, the greatest providers of entertainment were, of course, Augustus and his family. He sums up in *Res Gestae* 22–3: 'I gave gladiatorial shows three times in my own name and five times in the name of my sons or grandsons; about 10,000 men fought in these shows ... I gave the people hunts ... in the Circus, the Forum, or the Amphitheatre, on twenty-six occasions, at which about 3,500 beasts were killed. I staged a naval battle ... A basin was excavated, 1,800 ft long by 1,200 ft wide ... Some 3,000 men fought.' These last sentences refer to the construction in 2 on the right bank of the Tiber of the Naumachia Augusti, which opened on the day of the dedication of Augustus' Forum with a re-enactment of the battle of Salamis, in which the Greeks defeated the Persians in 480, a victory for freedom and of West against East, like, Augustus was suggesting, the battle of Actium. Its dimensions, of which Augustus is so proud, made it considerably larger than the Circus Maximus. Simultaneously with the mock naval battle, there was a beast hunt in which 260 lions were killed, another, aquatic, hunt in the Circus Flaminius including thirty-six crocodiles, and a gladiatorial contest.

The extravagance of the communal feasts, and the risk of violence from gladiators, could be a problem at times of crisis. When, in AD 5, famine followed earthquakes and severe flooding, Augustus had the gladiators and the slaves that were on sale in Rome removed 100 miles from the city; he also forbade people to give public banquets on his birthday. At the same time, he paid for those who were eligible for the grain hand-outs to be given twice the usual allowance. But seven years later a determined signal was given that normality had returned. The Games of Mars, relocated to the Forum of Augustus when the Circus Maximus had been flooded, were defiantly repeated at the Circus later in the year; at the second games, Germanicus had

200 lions killed. Rome was rich and mighty again, and displaying its mastery of other humans and of the fiercest beings of the natural world.

20

ORBI

Running the Empire

Wider still and wider

Given that the Romans established the greatest empire of the ancient world, it would be natural to assume that they were always eager to annex new territory. However, foreign expansion could be rejected because of the demands of civil war, as when Sulla in 85 left Mithridates in charge of Pontus in order to fight the Marians. As a general policy, the Senate as a whole had many motives for resisting the expansion of the Empire. A larger empire would mean a larger army, with more soldiers who depended on individual generals to provide them with booty and land on their discharge. They did not want to lose their exclusive status and feared that an expanded Empire would require an expanded Senate as more people were needed for the administration of the provinces.

Kings, especially if they were childless, might leave their kingdoms to Rome in the hope of avoiding civil war after their deaths, or of ensuring that the country became a province of the Empire on favourable terms. Even then, Rome did not always accept the offer. When King Ptolemy Apion of Cyrene died in 96, leaving his kingdom to the Romans, the Senate would not annex the territory and commanded that the cities should rule themselves.

In 74, however, seeing that the lack of strong government in Cyrene had led to the pirates seizing control of bases along the coast, the Romans incorporated much of the territory as the province of Cyrenaica. The addition of Cilicia (*c.* 102) and Crete (67) can also be explained as part of the campaign against the pirates. When Nicomedes IV of Bithynia left his kingdom to the Romans in 74, they immediately annexed the kingdom, realising that it would be fatal to Roman interests if Mithridates took it. The motive for annexation was not, however, always purely military. Wealthy Cyprus was added to the province of Cilicia on Clodius' initiative in 58, to help finance his free grain distribution.

Caesar began his wars in Gaul in 58 with highly debatable military justifications. He needed huge amounts of money, and military success to match that of his uncle Marius and rival Pompey. The people in Rome supported him out of fear of attack from the North, recalling the Gauls' sack of Rome in 390, which may not have been historical but was a story every Roman was told, and the defeats inflicted by the Cimbri and Teutones at the end of the second century. Many of his fellow senators supported him because they wanted his support in return – a repeated theme of Cicero's letters to his brother in the 50s, even though the Ciceros were not Caesar's natural political allies. Caesar's soldiers supported him because they depended on him for pay and for land after retirement. In this way, one man's personal ambition could start a full-scale war that led to the expansion of the Empire.

At least since Pompey's Eastern Settlement, there was a policy of surrounding the borders of the Empire with client kingdoms. At the beginning

of his reign, Augustus expanded the Empire considerably. Inevitably, a number of client kingdoms became provinces. We must, however, be careful to distinguish between a policy of expansion and a general policy of replacing client kingdoms with provinces. Augustus' expanded Empire continued to be fringed with client kingdoms. Three of the most powerful of the client kings established by Antony remained on their thrones: Amyntas of Galatia and Cilicia, Archelaus of Cappadocia and Herod of Judaea. While Galatia became a province on the death of Amyntas in 26, Cilicia was given to King Tarcondimotus. When Augustus added Juba II's kingdom of Numidia to the province of Africa in 25, he gave Juba Mauretania (Morocco) to rule instead. In Armenia, on the borders between the Roman and Parthian Empires, although the client rulers that Rome tried to establish were repeatedly expelled and the country fell into chaos, the Parthian royal family was too weakened by infighting to exploit Roman failure, and annexation was rejected as being a still more unattractive option.

Power, corruption and lies

The Latin word *provincia* refers not to an area but to a task. So the administration of the forests and cattle tracks, the *silvae callesque*, assigned to Caesar and Bibulus by the Senate as their job following their consulships though never taken up, was a *provincia*. A *provincia* abroad meant at first the command of a part of the army; it usually also involved the administration of the area where that part of the army was based. It did not necessarily imply an immediate claim of territory (Richardson 1976: 48). For example, Caesar was given Illyricum as part of his *provincia* from the beginning of 58, but it is uncertain when the area became part of the Roman Empire.

It became standard practice after a major victory for a commission of ten *legati* to be sent out from the Senate in order to help the commander to make treaties with the states in the region. Even that, however, might not immediately lead on to the annexation of territory. There might be considerable interference in the area before that. Roman magistrates might judge disputes in areas that were supposedly independent, and payments might be collected from countries that were not in the Empire, perhaps war reparations; colonies might even be founded. The foreign policy of the United States today shows how much a powerful country can interfere in the affairs of other states without making any official claims to territory, beyond those needed for military bases. The idea that Rome ruled the whole world rather than a defined territory within it was explicitly expressed in triumviral and Augustan times (Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.278–9; Ovid, *Fasti* 2.684: ‘the City of Rome extends as far as the world’), but it was not new.

The concept of a ‘province’ in the English sense, a defined geographical area within an empire, did emerge during this period. The person mainly responsible for this may have been Sulla. It is notable that in his system two consuls and eight praetors came to the end of their period of office every year, while by 80 there were ten defined regions within the Roman Empire: Sicily, Sardinia/Corsica, Nearer Spain, Further Spain, Africa, Macedonia, Asia, Transalpine Gaul, Cilicia and Cisalpine Gaul.

The role of governor grew out of that of a straightforward military commander, so all governors were holders of *imperium*. At first, when the duties of magistrates within Rome were light, it was usually consuls and praetors in their year of office who were sent abroad. As time went on, however, consuls and praetors tended to spend the whole year in Rome, and before going abroad had to receive permission, usually by a decree of the Senate, to continue to exercise power. They were, therefore, strictly speaking, private citizens, no longer elected magistrates, and could not exercise *imperium* within the *pomerium*, the sacred boundary of the city of Rome. They had *imperium* only in respect of the specific task that had been assigned to them, and this *imperium* was described as *pro consule* or *pro praetore*,

power exercised 'in the place of' a consul or praetor; they are known as proconsuls and propraetors. Sulla's legislation during his dictatorship made these arrangements compulsory: no-one could be sent abroad during his year in office in Rome; all holders of *imperium* abroad had to be promagistrates. While it was customary for these specific grants of power to be made to men who had just finished their terms of office as praetor or consul, anyone could be given a promagistracy, as in the case of Pompey's commands against Brutus in 77 and against Sertorius starting later the same year; legally, there was nothing irregular about these appointments, even though Pompey had never held any magistracy at all.

Provinciae could be assigned not by Senatorial decree but by a law of the Plebeian Assembly. This happened very occasionally before the 60s, but briefly became relatively common. In 67, by the *lex Gabinia*, the Assembly gave Pompey command against the pirates, a proposal that had been supported in the Senate only by Caesar. The following year, the *lex Manilia* gave Pompey the command against Mithridates. In 59, the *lex Vatinia* gave Caesar Illyricum and Cisalpine Gaul. In 55, the *lex Trebonia* gave Pompey the two provinces in Spain and Crassus Syria; Sulla's insistence on separating political power in Rome from military power abroad was ignored: Pompey 'governed' the Spanish provinces through his *legati* and stayed in Rome, where he became consul in 52. The assemblies were prepared to step in to other areas, again taking away the Senate's control of foreign affairs. Pompey's Eastern Settlement, made without the benefit of the customary ten-man senatorial commission, was rejected by the Senate but passed into law by the Plebeian Assembly in 59.

Governors were not under direct supervision from the Senate in Rome and had freedom of decision. They could not be prosecuted while in office. The main control that the Senate had over governors was its power to decide at the end of a year whether or not to prolong their governorship. Sulla tried to limit all governorships to one year, but it was not always practical to change governors so often, especially in a war, and by the mid-70s even Sulla's own supporters, such as Lucullus, were accepting governorships and commands that lasted many years. There were further attempts to limit periods in office under both Caesar and Augustus, but these too failed to have a lasting effect.

Once a governor had laid down his *imperium* and returned to Rome, he might be held to account for his actions. In 149, the Plebeian Assembly passed the *lex Calpurnia*, setting up a permanent court, the *quaestio de repetundis*, in which a former governor could be accused of illegally seizing money. Prosecutions could be brought only by an individual: in the ancient world, there were no prosecutions by the state in the manner of British 'The Queen versus' or 'The People versus' in the United States.

This was the only way for a provincial to prosecute a Roman official. It had severe limitations: it was very expensive to come to Rome and finance a case, and in cases of this importance a lawyer from the Senate was needed; one had

to be found who was prepared to prosecute one of his senatorial colleagues. At first, there was a further problem: the juries consisted of senators, who might be friends, political allies, or even relatives of the accused ex-governor; also, there were always many senators in need of hard cash and we hear of many accusations of jurymen being bribed. Even after a successful prosecution, there was no guarantee of getting money back. Those who had been, or were afraid of being, found guilty could simply escape. Verres fled from Rome to Massilia in 70, taking with him most of what he had stolen from the Sicilians; he was still so wealthy in 43 that the Triumvirs proscribed him to get his money.

Former governors might also be prosecuted under Sulla's *lex Cornelia de maiestate*, which prohibited a governor from leaving his province with or without an army or starting a war without authorisation. These provisions had been applied before to individual provinces, but Sulla made them universal. Again, however, the obvious impracticality of observing these limits during war led even optimates to ignore them. Lucullus in 74 was specifically allowed to take his army anywhere he wished in order to fight Mithridates.

Quaestors, elected magistrates, served on governors' staffs. A governor did not choose his own quaestor: quaestors' jobs were assigned by lot or by Senate decree. A quaestor was in charge of the finances of a province, sorting out the wages and provisions for the army and the expenses of the governor's staff, and at the end of his time both he and the governor had to submit their accounts to the treasury. A law of Caesar passed in 59, the *lex Julia de repetundis*, required quaestors and governors to leave copies of their accounts in the two main cities of the province.

Governors took *legati* with them to their province. These were important men, most often senators. *Legati* were technically chosen by the Senate, but appointments of family and friends were frequent enough to suggest that in practice they were chosen by the governor himself. For example, Cicero took his brother Quintus with him to Cilicia as a legate in 51–0.

As well as the *legati*, both governor and quaestor brought with them a number of *apparitores* of their own choosing. This was typical of the informal and *ad hoc* nature of Roman bureaucracy (senators made use of *apparitores* in Rome as well). They included the lictors and scribes, and a set of *amici* of the governor who advised him and were paid expenses by the treasury. Roman officials always used a group of advisers (a *consilium*). The *amici* clearly often expected to get more than expenses: Cicero (*ad Att.* 7.1.6 = LACTOR 10, no. 25) wrote that his advisers were angry with him for not dividing up the surplus money left at the end of his governorship of Cilicia among them. It is worth noting that this surplus money, accumulated by a governor who claimed to be honest, who was not burdened by debt and who had spent only a year in his province, amounted to 2.2 million sesterces (*ad fam.* 5.20.9 = LACTOR 10, no. 26).

Governors were given a set amount of money for buying grain for

themselves and their armies, and the Senate fixed the price at which the grain was to be brought. Governors might force provincials to provide beds and food for soldiers. The cost of this must have been high: it was limited by the *lex Julia de repetundis*. There was considerable room for abuse if the governor was unscrupulous: he could, for example, take bribes to let a farmer off supplying grain if the price fixed by the Senate was low, or to let a homeowner off having to billet a soldier. Governors might, in fact, demand payments from the provincials without giving any reason; limits were placed on this too by the *lex Julia de repetundis*. In the patron-client system that operated throughout the Mediterranean, provincials might offer 'gifts' to governors in the expectation of some return, and the border between this and simple corruption could be hard to define. The *lex Julia de repetundis* tried to deal with this, too, limiting the value of gifts that a governor could accept.

A Senatorial decree of 53, passed into law on Pompey's proposal in 52, made an interval of five years between a magistracy in Rome and an overseas command compulsory. The idea was to prevent politicians from spending vast amounts buying support from the people in the expectation that they would quickly make back the money by exploiting their province. The law only remained in force for a couple of years before civil war broke out, but according to Dio (53.14) it was brought back by Augustus in 27 for appointments to governorships in the public provinces.

Even a governor who was personally honest found himself under enormous pressure to exploit the province in the interests of others. Cicero was pestered by Caelius, who wanted panthers for his games in Rome (*ad fam.* 8.9.3, 2.11.2 = LACTOR 10, nos. 5, 15); he was asked by Scaptius, who turned out to be an agent of Brutus, for military help in collecting a debt from the local senators of Salamis in Cyprus (*ad Att.* 5.21.10–13, 6.1.5–7, 6.2, 6.3 = LACTOR 10, nos. 13, 14, 16, 17). Cicero refused, and tried to get Scaptius to reduce the 48 per cent interest rate on the loan. Cicero risked making an enemy of Brutus, and his equestrian friend Atticus disapproved of his failure to support an agreed business deal (*ad Att.* 6.2.7–8 = LACTOR 10, no. 16).

Outside the campaigning season, governors spent most of their time in the law courts and the *legati* and quaestors would also hear some cases; they were not only involved in deciding cases that involved Roman citizens. In at least some provinces, the circumstances in which a governor could exercise jurisdiction were defined by the *lex provinciae*, a decree drawn up by the province's first governor in consultation with the ten-man senatorial commission and later approved by the Senate. Other measures might be passed later on, further defining the governors' powers.

Governors also issued edicts at the start of their governorships, indicating what powers they intended to exercise, particularly in the area of law. A governor then had to stick to his edict. However, he was not subject to scrutiny or check by his fellow Romans. Governors had to travel around their provinces, as High Court Judges in Britain travel around the country. Even

when Caesar was fighting the Gallic War, he spent his winters hearing cases in Illyricum and Cisalpine Gaul.

Governors had *ius gladii* (the power of life and death) over the soldiers that they commanded, and over those who were not Roman citizens. Roman citizens could make an appeal against governors' decisions to the People during the Republic, and to the Emperor during the Principate. In a later period St Paul, who was a Roman citizen, famously appealed to the Emperor (who was, unfortunately for St Paul, Nero).

Foreign communities did not all have the same status. Some had a treaty with Rome (*civitates foederatae*), or a measure of independence not guaranteed by treaty (*civitates liberae*); the least favoured were those that had to pay regular taxes (*civitates stipendiariae*). The *lex Julia de repetundis* confirmed the rights of *civitates liberae* to be free of interference from the governor, especially in legal matters. The difficulties of travel and communication in the ancient world, and the limited Roman bureaucracy, meant that all communities were for the most part administered by local councillors.

All in all, it cannot be said that there was a coherent system for governing the Roman provinces even by the end of the Republic (Richardson 1994). The only consistency that existed was negative, in laws that set limits to governors' powers.

Relations between Romans and provincials were not confined to senators in their official capacities. Roman politicians spent a great deal of time doing favours for and securing the support of foreign communities. In the four months after the killing of Caesar, Cicero and Atticus obsessively worried over some land that they were helping the people of Buthrotum in northern Greece to secure. Augustus was naturally at great pains to take care of the provinces. In particular, he gave money to help rebuild towns destroyed by earthquakes (Suetonius, *Augustus* 47; Dio 54.23); one community that he helped in this way, the Greek island of Cos, honoured Augustus as its second founder.

The reorganisation of the Empire into public and imperial provinces under Augustus has already been mentioned (see above, [Chapter 13](#)). Equestrian officials called procurators were in charge of collecting taxes and authorising expenditure in the imperial provinces. Procurators were originally administrators of specific lands within provinces that were owned by the Roman state or by the Emperor personally. In the public provinces, they continued to exercise that limited role (Dio 53, 15), while the main business of administering income and expenditure was still done by quaestors.

Some of the imperial provinces had *equites* as governors; in Augustus' reign these were all called prefects. They governed 'small but awkward' provinces (Richardson 1976: 61), and Egypt, which was large and awkward. The appointment of *equites* as governors was a radical step, but was logical given their increasing employment as officers in the army.

Adjustments were made to the division between public and imperial provinces made in the settlement of 27. In 22, Cyprus and Gallia Narbonensis, neither of which had legionary troops in them, were changed from imperial to public provinces, but more transfers were the other way, and by the end of Augustus' reign, the only public province with legions in it was Africa.

The Emperor chose most of the governors of the Empire himself, and kept a close eye on them. He also made himself available to delegations from the provinces. A senatorial decree passed in 4 (the *senatus consultum Calvisianum*) offered a quicker way for provincials to get back money extorted from them, showing a keen awareness that drawn-out proceedings in Rome might make it difficult or impossible for provincials to see a law case through and get justice (decree in LACTOR 17: M78). Above all, however, the provincials benefited from the fact that the votes of the Romans were becoming no longer valuable enough to be worth buying: it was the favour of Augustus that secured election, and so governors had less reason to extort money. The *plebs'* loss was the provincials' gain.

Publicans and sinners

Taxation policy was set by the Senate, not by individual governors. Although the governors were ultimately responsible for the collection of taxes in their provinces, as for everything else, in practice they had almost nothing to do with it.

Some forms of taxation were used across the Empire: customs dues, and the *scriptura*, a tax, paid by pastoral farmers in Italy and the provinces, based on the number of animals owned. Both were collected by firms of *publicani*.

Romans often took over without change the arrangements made by previous rulers. There could, therefore, be differences in taxation from one province to another. In some provinces (for example, Spain, Africa and Macedonia), the major tax was a fixed tax called the *stipendium*, collected by locals and delivered to Roman officials. In the East and in Sicily, the major tax was tithes. As with the customs dues and *scriptura*, the Roman state auctioned off the right to collect tithes, in the case of the Eastern provinces to Roman firms of *publicani* and in the case of Sicily to local tax collectors. The tax collectors made an investment: they paid the state a fixed amount of money up front and kept the taxes that they collected, taking the risk of losing money because of a bad harvest. Of course, in addition to the costs which any method of collecting the taxes would involve, the companies of *publicani* or local tax collectors would expect a profit.

Contracts for the collection of taxes were made between companies of *publicani* and the censors every five years, so the companies would stay at least five years in a province, far longer than most governors. They offered governors important services: governors could take money from the *publicani* for the administration of the province, using them as a bank; the companies' couriers, who could be hired out, were the only way of getting letters from one part of the Empire to another other than using private arrangements. All in all, governors were alarmingly dependent upon the *publicani*. If *publicani* were exploiting the provincials, governors might take bribes to turn a blind eye, or simply be afraid to confront them. The *publicani* themselves, unlike senators, could not be prosecuted in the extortion court.

However, Cicero points out in a letter of 60/59 (*ad Q. frat.* 1.1.33) that native tax collectors were no better; several Greek communities had appealed to the Senate to make Romans rather than the neighbouring island of Rhodes collect their taxes. Of course, this comes from a Roman, and a politician who depended on the support of the *equites*; but the New Testament provides powerful evidence against the idea that local tax collectors in the Empire were any less hated than Roman *publicani*.

Having said this, the exploitation of the East in the late Republic was appalling. In 70, the Eastern provinces were 120,000 talents in debt (2.88 billion sesterces, with interest constantly adding to the sum: Plutarch, *Lucullus*

20). The extent to which the money from the East paid for the expenses of the state can be illustrated by comparing this figure with the 57.6 million sesterces that it cost to buy grain for distribution in Rome in 57 (Nicolet 1994: 640). In order to pay their taxes, the provincials had to borrow at very high rates of interest, usually from Italian businessmen, since their own countrymen did not have money to lend, and frequently became bankrupt. So when, encouraged by Mithridates, the provincials of Asia rose up in rebellion in 88, they killed not just the *publicani* themselves but 80,000 Italian businessmen and their families.

This massacre led to Sulla imposing reparations upon the Eastern provinces; this was one explanation for their extreme financial distress. Another was simply their wealth, which tempted Roman tax collectors and businessmen into fleecing them remorselessly. A third factor was the use of tithes as the main form of taxation: the constant reassessments, each year's harvest being different, offered repeated opportunities for exploitation and corruption. In 48, Caesar abolished the system of tithes in Sicily and Asia, replacing it with a fixed tax based on an assessment of the value of the land owned by the taxpayer.

In 123–2, Gaius Gracchus passed a law that replaced the senatorial juries in the extortion court with juries of *equites*. Sulla reintroduced senatorial juries to the *quaestiones* (permanent courts) in 81–0. The change to mixed juries of senators, *equites* and *tribuni aerarii* in 70 might have been beneficial to the provincials, since *tribuni aerarii*, belonging to the property class below the *equites*, were not wealthy enough to be *publicani*. However, Caesar removed the *tribuni aerarii* during the 40s.

Gaius Gracchus was helped to make his case for changing the juries by the scandalous acquittals of some recent governors (Appian 1.21–2), and the change to mixed juries in 70 came after a number of similarly controversial acquittals by senatorial courts (Dolabella in 77, Antonius Hybrida in 76 and Terentius Varro twice, in 75 and 74). However, it is highly unlikely that the main motive of those who changed the make-up of juries in the permanent courts was to make life fairer for the provincials, and certainly this will not have been the case after 81, by which time there were at least seven *quaestiones*, covering all serious crimes. Class interests might bias a jury of *equites* in favour of *publicani*, just as they biased a senatorial jury in favour of accused governors. And provinces stood to lose more money to a corrupt group of *publicani* than to even a hugely greedy governor and his staff. The equestrian juries produced appalling scandals of their own. In 92, Rutilius, a legate in Asia, tried to protect the provincials from corrupt *publicani*. He was, shockingly, accused of extortion and convicted by an equestrian jury. The outrage shown over this episode in our sources (for example, Velleius 2.13) would not in itself prove that he was innocent, because the historians rely so much on the writings of senators who were biased against the equestrian juries. But when Rutilius was sentenced to exile he went to live in Asia and

was welcomed enthusiastically by the cities of the province that he had supposedly robbed.

The *equites* did not always need to use the courts to bring down a governor who they believed was acting against their interests. After Lucullus reformed taxation in Asia and cancelled some interest payments on debts, the *equites* turned against him; this was an important factor in his being stripped of his command against Mithridates by the *lex Manilia* of 66.

A question of class

Within the empire, there were social and political distinctions both between Roman citizens, Latins and non-citizens, and between the different social classes.

There was a clear difference between Italy, whose entire free population were citizens of Rome from the late 60s onwards, and the rest of the Empire, where Roman citizens were a highly privileged and resented group.

Before 89, Italy had been divided between Rome itself and its 'allies' (in fact, subjects). The free population of Italy had consisted of one third Roman citizens and two thirds Latins and allies, with the Italians supplying roughly 60 per cent of contingents in the Roman army. It took until the 60s for all the free population of Italy to become included in the Roman citizen body. That still did not mean equal treatment. Rome continued to confiscate a considerable amount of land from the Italians until the start of Augustus' reign; a good deal of this land went to colonies.

The citizens of Cisalpine Gaul, which occupies a large chunk of modern Italy (north of Pisa in the west and Ariminum, modern Rimini, in the East), were not given the privileges granted to the peninsular Italians in 89; Cisalpine Gaul became a province. Although it became part of Italy in 40 when its last governor, Pollio, fled after the Perusine War, its administration was not harmonised with that of the rest of Italy until Augustus' reorganisation of the whole of Italy into regions around the year 7.

There was substantial emigration from Italy throughout this period, many of the emigrants being Roman citizens. In the late Republic, very many Italians migrated to the fertile region of the Po Valley in Cisalpine Gaul, mixing with the local Celtic population and preparing the way for it to become absorbed into Italy. Emigration to Spain, Gallia Narbonensis, Sicily and Africa was constant and substantial, as it was to Greece and Asia Minor; a greater proportion of emigrants to the East were businessmen. It is estimated that there were 370,000 Roman citizens outside Italy in 69, 450,000 in 49 and 1,250,000 by 28, the number swelled by the establishment of colonies and by settlement of individuals on confiscated land abroad.

Not all of these, of course, had been born citizens and moved out from Italy. There is evidence for many thousands of Roman citizens throughout the province with the first names of Gaius Julius. A man acquiring Roman citizenship took the first two names of the Roman who had given him that citizenship, and then passed those names on to his male descendants. For an ex-slave, this would be the first two names of his old master; for a provincial, it would be the names of the politician who decided to grant him citizenship. Many of the families of Gaius Juliuses got their citizenship from Julius Caesar, and a few from Gaius Caligula, but there is no doubt that Augustus gave out very many grants of citizenship during his time as a Triumvir and,

especially, during his reign.

The census of 70/69 produced a figure of 910,000 Roman citizens. Three censuses are known from the reign of Augustus, completed in 28, 8 and AD 14, mentioned in *Res Gestae* 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4 respectively, giving figures of 4,063,000, 4,233,000 and 4,937,000. Augustus confirms (*Res Gestae* 8.2) that the forty-two-year gap between 70 and 28 is not caused by missing evidence: in the political difficulties of the end of the Republic, no censuses were taken. Possibly only adult males were included in the figures before Augustus, while the Augustan censuses counted women and children; or perhaps far more citizens failed to register during the late Republic (Cooley 2009: 141). Nonetheless, the upward trend is striking.

Soldiers are an important element in the history of the expansion of citizenship. Legionnaires had to be citizens when they enrolled, but auxiliary soldiers were non-citizens who won the citizenship on completion of their military service. The names on inscriptions suggest that the army was not full of Italians: in the western provinces it was made up of soldiers from the west and in the Eastern provinces of soldiers from the East.

The founding of colonies, settlements of Roman citizens whose political structures, entertainments, and religious practices were consciously modelled on those of Rome, was common throughout the period. Caesar accelerated the process, but the greatest burst of activity was under Augustus, mostly in Italy in the Triumviral period and abroad during his reign. In *Res Gestae* 28, Augustus states that twenty-eight colonies were founded 'on my authority' in Italy (actually there were more; he is probably excluding those founded under the Triumvirate), while abroad colonies of soldiers were founded throughout the Empire. All the colonies, which at the time of their foundation were full of recently serving soldiers, would help to keep the peace as well as providing places for the soldiers to retire. The major need for colonies was in the 20s as Augustus settled many of the vast numbers of soldiers who had been recruited for the civil wars; the rate of founding of new settlements decreased rapidly as the reign went on.

Colonies were rural settlements in origin, though some grew into urban centres, their function being to provide land for retired soldiers. At least among conservative politicians, they were seen as a way of saving the countryside by making farmers out of soldiers at the end of their lives. They were not, however, exclusively for soldiers: Narbo, though its military functions are emphasised by Cicero (*Pro Fonteio* 13), was a thriving commercial centre, with Roman businessmen emigrating to take advantage of its position on trade routes and take business away from locals.

As well as a vehicle for spreading Roman citizenship and for spreading Roman citizens throughout the Empire, the army was a great vehicle for social mobility. After the Sicilian War of 36, retired centurions were given the rank of town councillors in the *municipia* where they were born or settled, whether in Italy or the provinces.

Rome kept down class strife within the cities of the empire, but not in an evenhanded way. In Greece and the Greek cities of Asia, there had been a mixture of democratic and oligarchic local government. Rome consistently suppressed democratic assemblies in favour of councils restricted to wealthy property owners. The process was accelerated by Sulla, but did not stop under Caesar, Antony or Augustus, in spite of their claims to be *populares* in Roman politics.

This is central to our understanding of the success of the Roman Empire. It is clear that at some times and in some places Roman rule was far from beneficial to most of the provincials and was hugely unpopular (see above). In general, there were both advantages and disadvantages. The establishment of a vast area within which there were low customs tariffs, the building of better roads (though most international trade continued to be by sea – Nicolet 1994: 628–9), and the encouragement of urbanisation both unconscious, as in the spontaneous growing up of towns by large military camps, and conscious, where the Romans established administrative centres in the western provinces for their own convenience, all encouraged trade. In some provinces, serfs became independent farmers, but this was far from universal, and Egypt was a notable exception. The powerful Roman army might help keep raiders away from the borders, but provincials might, until the reign of Augustus, be sucked into Rome's civil wars. Rome's conquest of the Hellenistic kingdoms with their powerful navies contributed to the rise of piracy, a menace to trade and to life for decades until Pompey finally took some control of the seas in 67. There was always corruption: it was to some extent controlled under Augustus but never disappeared; and, by definition, provincial status involved the loss of freedom. However, Romans generally secured the degree of support they needed from the upper classes in the provinces because they upheld their interests.

The Romans are often credited with being tolerant rulers who respected local customs, languages, religious beliefs and laws. To some extent this was inevitable because, with the slow transport and communications of the ancient world, it was beyond the power of any ancient rulers to control their subjects' lives minutely: totalitarianism depends on technology. But to some extent it was a matter of choice. Romans were capable of prejudice against the customs and religions of foreigners, but they were usually prepared to put aside differences in order to work with local ruling classes. While, of course, Rome was dominant within it, the Empire was above all an international brotherhood of substantial property owners.

TIMELINE

The names of the consuls for each year are given. Suffect consuls are not named unless they are particularly important, in which case they are mentioned in the text.

83 Cornelius Scipio and C. Norbanus

Sulla returned from the East. Marian/Sullan civil war began. Crassus and Pompey raised armies and joined Sulla.

82 Papirius Carbo (3) and C. Marius (the young Marius) November

Battle of the Colline Gate. Sulla took Rome.

M. Tullius Decula and Cn. Cornelius Dolabella

Sulla's proscriptions. Sulla became dictator *reipublicae constituendae*, began to introduce Sullan constitution. Pompey given propraetorian *imperium* against Marians in Sicily.

80 Cornelius Sulla (2) and Q. Caecilius Metellus Pius

Pompey fought against Marians in Africa, Metellus Pius against Sertorius in Spain. Cicero defended Sextus Roscius. Sulla laid down dictatorship (or early 79).

79 Servilius Vatia Isauricus and Ap. Claudius Pulcher

Pompey's first Triumph. Retirement of Sulla.

M. Aemilius Lepidus and Q. Lutatius Catulus

Lepidus tried to challenge the Sullan reforms.

78 Junius Brutus and Mam. Aemilius Lepidus

Revolt of Lepidus. Catulus defeated Lepidus, Pompey with propraetorian *imperium* defeated and killed Brutus.

76n. Octavius and C. Scribonius Curio

Pompey given proconsular *imperium* to assist Metellus Pius in Spain against Sertorius.

75 Octavius and C. Aurelius Cotta

Lex Aurelia allowed tribunes to progress to further office again. Pompey suffered military setbacks in Spain.

74 Licinius Lucullus and M. Aurelius Cotta

Nicomedes of Bithynia died and left his kingdom to Rome. Mithridates invaded Bithynia. L. Lucullus given command against him. M. Antonius sent against the pirates.

M. Terentius Varro Lucullus and C. Cassius Longinus

Revolt of Spartacus began.

72 Gellius Publicola and Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Clodianus

Crassus took command against Spartacus. Assassination of Sertorius in Spain.

71 Cornelius Lentulus Sura and Cn. Aufidius Orestes

Pompey returned to Italy and celebrated second Triumph for victory in Spain. Crassus awarded ovation. Lucullus defeated Mithridates, who fled to Tigranes of Armenia.

70n. Pompeius Magnus (Pompey) (1) and M. Licinius Crassus (1)

Full powers of the tribunes restored. Cicero prosecuted Verres. *Lex Aurelia Cotta* ended

senatorial monopoly of the juries. Lucullus made financial arrangements in Asia. Sixty-four senators expelled from the Senate by the censors.

Q Hortensius Hortalus and Q. Caecilius Metellus Creticus

Lucullus invaded Armenia.

68 Caecilius Metellus and Q. Marcius Rex

Mutiny of Lucullus' army at Nisibis.

67 Calpurnius Piso and M. Acilius Glabrio

Pompey given command against pirates by *lex Gabinia*. Successful three-month campaign.

66. Aemilius Lepidus and L. Volcacius Tullus

Pompey given command against Mithridates by *lex Manilia*.

65 Aurelius Cotta and L. Manlius Torquatus

Crassus and Catulus became censors. Caesar's aedileship.

64 Julius Caesar and C. Marcius Figulus

Cicero and Antonius Hybrida defeated Catiline in consular election. Pompey in Syria.

M. Tullius Cicero and C. Antonius Hybrida

Failure of Rullan Bill. Caesar elected *pontifex maximus*. Catilinarian Conspiracy. **October** SCU passed. **December** Cicero executed five Roman citizens without a trial using the power of the SCU. Pompey in Jerusalem. Death of Mithridates.

62 Junius Silanus and L. Licinius Murena

Clodius involved in Bona Dea scandal. **December** Pompey returned to Rome.

M. Pupius Piso and M. Valerius Messalla

Caesar departed for Spain as propraetor. Pompey failed to get ratification of Eastern Settlement or land for his veterans. Bona Dea trial.

Q Caecilius Metellus Celer and L. Afranius

Crassus failed to secure renegotiation of tax contract in Asia. Senate refused to allow Caesar to stand for consulship *in absentia*; he gave up a Triumph. Caesar, Pompey and Crassus united in the First Triumvirate.

69 Julius Caesar (1) and M. Calpurnius Bibulus

Pompey married Julia, Caesar's daughter. Pompey obtained land for veterans; Eastern Settlement ratified. Tax contract in Asia renegotiated. *Lex Vatinia* awarded Caesar five years' *imperium* and Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum. On the death of Metellus Celer he also received Transalpine Gaul. Clodius became a plebeian. Triumvirs restored Ptolemy Auletes to Egyptian throne.

68 Calpurnius Piso and A. Gabinius

Clodius was tribune, legalised *collegia*, announced free corn. Exile of Cicero. Cato sent to Cyprus to supervise its annexation. Caesar departed for Gaul and defeated Helvetii and Suebi.

67 Cornelius Lentulus Spinther and Q. Caecilius Metellus Nepos

Violent clashes between followers of Clodius and Milo. Return of Cicero from exile. Pompey made Controller of the Grain Supply. Caesar defeated Belgae and Nervii. Ptolemy Auletes driven out of Egypt.

66. Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus and L. Marcius Philippus

April Conference of Luca. First Triumvirate re-established. Caesar campaigned against Veneti.

65. Pompeius Magnus (Pompey) (2) and M. Licinius Crassus (2)

Caesar received five further years' *imperium*, five years' *imperium* also for Pompey in Spain and Crassus in Syria. Pompey's Theatre opened. Caesar defeated Germanic tribes, bridged the Rhine and invaded Britain. Crassus left for Parthian campaign.

64 Domitius Ahenobarbus and Ap. Claudius Pulcher

Failure to hold elections. Death of Julia. Caesar's second invasion of Britain. Gabinius restored Ptolemy Auletes to throne of Egypt.

53h. Domitius Calvinus and M. Valerius Messalla

No consuls for first six months of the year. Failure to hold elections as all consular candidates facing trial for corruption. **June** Crassus defeated and killed at Carrhae.

52h. Pompeius Magnus (Pompey) (3) and Q. Caecilius Metellus Pius Scipio

January Murder of Clodius. SCU passed. Pompey began year as sole consul. Trial of Milo. Law of the Ten Tribunes. Revolt of Vercingetorix in Gaul. Siege of Alesia. **October** Vercingetorix surrendered.

51r. Sulpicius Rufus and M. Claudius Marcellus

Death of Ptolemy Auletes; joint rule of Ptolemy XII and Cleopatra.

50 Aemilius Lepidus Paullus and C. Claudius Marcellus (minor)

Tribunate of Curio. **December** Senate vote in favour of both Pompey and Caesar giving up their commands, vetoed.

49 Claudius Marcellus (major) and L. Cornelius Lentulus Crus

Tribunes Mark Antony and Cassius fled to Caesar. **January** Caesar crossed Rubicon; took ten-day dictatorship; raided Treasury. **March** Pompey left for Greece. **June** Caesar defeated Pompeians in Spain at Ilerda. Curio defeated and killed in Africa.

48 Julius Caesar (2) and P. Servilius Isauricus

April–July Campaign at Dyrrachium. **August** Defeat of Pompey at Pharsalus. Death of Pompey in Egypt. Caesar began one-year dictatorship, fought Alexandrine War. Cleopatra became Queen of Egypt.

47. Fufius Calenus and P. Vatinius

Mark Antony Master of the Horse. **August** Caesar defeated Pharnaces at Zela, settled the East, returned to Italy in **September**.

46 Julius Caesar (3) and M. Aemilius Lepidus (1)

April Caesar defeated Pompeians in Africa at Thapsus. Suicide of Cato at Utica. **July** Caesar returned to Rome, held four Triumphs. New calendar introduced. Caesar awarded ten-year dictatorship.

45 Julius Caesar (4) with no colleague

March Caesar defeated Pompeians in Spain at Munda. **September** Caesar returned to Rome. Triumph. Exceptional honours granted.

44 Julius Caesar (5) and M. Antonius (1)

Caesar made dictator for life; planned to leave for new Parthian campaign. **February** Feast of Lupercalia. Caesar offered crown by Mark Antony, refused. **15 March** Assassination of Caesar on the Ides. **17 March** Meeting of the Senate: Caesar's laws confirmed, conspirators granted amnesty. **20 March** Reading of Caesar's will in the Forum; Gaius Octavius named Caesar's main heir, took name Caesar Octavian; Caesar's body burned. **April** Lepidus became *pontifex maximus*. Brutus and Cassius fled Rome. **May** Caesar Octavian arrived in Rome; attempted to legalise his adoption by

Caesar. **August** Brutus and Cassius left Italy. **September** Cicero delivered first *Philippic* speech against Antony. **November** Caesar Octavian brought troops into Rome. Two of Antony's legions defected to Caesar Octavian. Antony took troops to Cisalpine Gaul to fight Decimus Brutus.

⚔️ **Vibius Pansa and A. Hirtius**

January Senate sent Caesar Octavian and consuls Hirtius and Pansa to fight Antony. **April** Antony defeated at battles of Forum Gallorum and Mutina. Deaths of Hirtius and Pansa. Senate gave Brutus and Cassius *imperium* in the East. **May** Lepidus' army joined Antony's army in Gaul. **August** Caesar Octavian marched on Rome, elected consul (1). **November** Antony and Lepidus returned to Italy and met with Caesar Octavian. Creation of Second Triumvirate. **December** Start of proscriptions. Cicero proscribed and killed.

⚔️ **Aemilius Lepidus (2) and L. Munatius Plancus**

1 January Julius Caesar declared a god. **October** First battle of Philippi; suicide of Cassius. **November** Second battle of Philippi; defeat and suicide of Brutus.

⚔️ **Antonius and P. Servilius Isauricus (2)**

Lucius Antonius attacked Caesar Octavian. Caesar Octavian besieged Lucius Antonius in Perugia. Antony met Cleopatra; they spent winter together in Alexandria.

⚔️ **Domitius Calvinus and C. Asinius Pollio**

Surrender of Lucius Antonius. Cisalpine Gaul became part of Italy. Parthians invaded Syria.

October Antony and Caesar Octavian agreed Pact of Brundisium. Antony married Octavia.

⚔️ **Marcus Censorinus and C. Calvisius Sabinus** Triumvirs negotiated Pact of Puteoli with Sextus Pompey.

⚔️ **Claudius Pulcher and C. Norbanus Flaccus**

Caesar Octavian married Livia. Ventidius defeated the Parthians. Caesar Octavian renewed conflict with Sextus Pompey; suffered defeat off Sicily.

⚔️ **Vipsanius Agrippa (1) and L. Caninius Gallus**

Antony and Caesar Octavian signed treaty at Tarentum. Renewal of Triumvirate. Herod became king of Judaea (or 36).

⚔️ **Gellius Publicola and M. Cocceius Nerva**

Antony reunited with Cleopatra. Caesar Octavian, Agrippa, Statilius Taurus and Lepidus attacked Sextus Pompey in Sicily. **September 3** Defeat of Sextus Pompey at Naulochus. Attempted revolt and disgrace of Lepidus. Caesar Octavian given tribunician sacrosanctity. Antony defeated by Parthians.

⚔️ **Cornificius and Sex. Pompeius**

Caesar Octavian invaded Illyricum.

⚔️ **Antonius (2) and L. Scribonius Libo**

Antony conquered Armenia. Donations of Alexandria.

⚔️ **Emperor Caesar (Octavian) (2) and L. Volcacius Tullus**

Agrippa was aedile, cleaned sewers, repaired and built aqueducts.

⚔️ **Domitius Ahenobarbus and C. Sosius**

Caesar Octavian read out Antony's will, declared war on Cleopatra.

⚔️ **Emper. Caesar (Octavian) (3) and M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus**

2 September Battle of Actium. Plot of Marcus Lepidus the Younger.

⚔️ **Emper. Caesar (Octavian) (4) and M. Licinius Crassus**

Deaths of Antony and Cleopatra. Caesar Octavian took over Egypt.

⚔️ **Emper. Caesar (Octavian) (5) and Sex. Appuleius**

Caesar Octavian celebrated triple Triumph. Closing of the doors of Janus. Review of the

Senate.

66p. Caesar (Octavian) (6) and M. Vipsanius Agrippa (2)

Augustus and Agrippa conducted first census since 70. Beginning of 'First Settlement'.

Large-scale programme of restoration of temples.

66p. Caesar (Octavian) (7) and M. Vipsanius Agrippa (3)

Prosecution and suicide of Cornelius Gallus, first Prefect of Egypt. Refusal to give Marcus Crassus *spolia opima*.

13 January Caesar Octavian resigned his powers; Empire split into 'public' and 'imperial' provinces. Caesar Octavian given the name Augustus.

66p. Caesar Augustus (8) and T. Statilius Taurus (2)

Augustus fell ill campaigning in Spain. Messalla appointed Prefect of the City but resigned.

66p. Caesar Augustus (9) and M. Junius Silanus

Marriage of Marcellus and Julia.

66p. Caesar Augustus (10) and C. Norbanus Flaccus

66p. Caesar Augustus (11) and A. Terentius Varro Murena

Augustus became seriously ill; resigned the consulship

(**1 July**); given *maius imperium* and tribunician power for life. Plague and grain shortage.

Publication of Books 1–3 of Horace's *Odes*. Conspiracy of Caepio and Murena. Aedileship and death of Marcellus.

M. Claudius Marcellus Aeserninus and L. Arruntius

Aemilius Lepidus and Plancus became last censors ever appointed. Augustus refused dictatorship and permanent consulship.

M. Lollius and Q. Aemilius Lepidus

Agrippa married Julia.

M. Appuleius and P. Silius Nerva

Parthia returned Roman standards to Augustus.

Q. Sentius Saturninus and Q. Lucretius Vespillo

Execution of Egnatius Rufus. Augustus returned to Rome, given consular power for life.

Death of Virgil.

P. Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus and Cn. Cornelius Lentulus

Second Augustan review of the Senate. Property qualification for senators raised to one million sesterces. Renewal of Augustus' control of the imperial provinces. Agrippa given tribunician power. Julian marriage laws.

C. Furnius and C. Junius Silanus

Ludi Saeculares. Augustus adopted Gaius and Lucius Caesar.

I. Domitius Ahenobarbus and P. Cornelius Scipio

Statilius Taurus appointed Prefect of the City. Plot of Cinna.

M. Livius Drusus Libo and L. Calpurnius Piso

M. Licinius Crassus Frugi and Cn. Cornelius Lentulus

T. Claudius Nero (1) and P. Quinctilius Varus

Augustus set fixed lengths of service for soldiers. Death of Lepidus.

M. Valerius Messalla Appianus and P. Sulpicius Quirinius

6 March Augustus became *pontifex maximus*. Death of Agrippa.

Q. Aelius Tubero and Paullus Fabius Maximus

Tiberius divorced Vipsania Agrippina and married Julia.

Africanus Fabius Maximus and Iullus Antonius

Nero Claudius Drusus and T. Quinctius Crispinus Sulpicianus

Death of Nero Drusus.

C. Marcius Censorinus and C. Asinius Gallus

Deaths of Maecenas and Horace.

Ti. Claudius Nero (2) and Cn. Calpurnius Piso

Reorganisation of Rome into fourteen new regions.

D. Laelius Balbus and C. Antistius Vetus

Tiberius retired to Rhodes.

Imp. Caesar Augustus (12) and L. Cornelius Sulla

C. Calvisius Sabinus and L. Passienus Rufus

L. Cornelius Lentulus and M. Valerius Messalla Messallinus

Imp. Caesar Augustus (13) and M. Plautius Silvanus

Augustus given title of *pater patriae*. Dedication of the Forum of Augustus. Exiles of Julia and Scribonia, death of Iullus Antonius.

Cossus Cornelius Lentulus and L. Calpurnius Piso

Gaius Caesar sent to the East.

Caesar and L. Aemilius Paullus

M. Valerius Messalla Volesus and P. Alfenus Varus

Death of Lucius Caesar. Return of Tiberius to Rome.

M. Aelius Lamia and M. Servilius

M. Aelius Catus and C. Sentius Saturninus

Death of Gaius Caesar. Augustus adopted Tiberius and Agrippa Postumus. Tiberius adopted Germanicus.

M. Valerius Messalla Volesus and Cn. Cornelius Cinna Magnus

Creation of the Military Treasury.

M. Aemilius Lepidus and L. Arruntius

Agrippa Postumus expelled from royal family. Outbreak of revolt in Illyricum.

Q. Caecilius Metellus Creticus Silanus and A. Licinius Nerva Silianus

Agrippa Postumus disinherited and exiled.

M. Furius Camillus and Sex. Nonius Quinctilianus

Exiles of Julia the Younger and Ovid.

P. Oppaeus Sabinus and Q. Sulpicius Camerinus

Tiberius brought war in Illyricum to end. Varian disaster in Germany.

Cn. Cornelius Dolabella and C. Junius Silanus

M. Aemilius Lepidus and T. Statilius Taurus

G. Germanicus Caesar and C. Fonteius Capito

S. Silbus Caecina Largus and L. Munatius Plancus

Renewal of Augustus' powers; Tiberius received equal *imperium* with Augustus across Empire.

S. Pompeius and Sex. Appuleius

19 August Death of Augustus. Killing of Agrippa Postumus. Augustus declared a god. Tiberius became Emperor.

GLOSSARY

Words in bold are defined elsewhere in the glossary.

aedile One of the lesser **magistrates**. There were two **plebeian** aediles and two **curule** aediles, originally **patricians**, responsible for the running of the city: they organised public festivals and games, and were responsible for public works, roads, traffic and markets in Rome.

aerarium The state treasury.

ager publicus Public land owned by the state.

ambitus Electoral bribery.

amici Political allies.

amicitia An informal alliance or political friendship. annals Histories written in a strictly chronological order, giving the events of each year in sequence. The adjective is 'annalistic'.

Appian Way The road from Rome to Brundisium. It was begun in the fourth century as a military project by Appius Claudius Caecus. Six thousand supporters of Spartacus were crucified along the road by Crassus in 71.

assembly See **comitia**. A reference to 'the Assembly' indicates the **concilium plebis**.

auctoritas Personal influence and prestige separate from the powers obtained from holding office, and based upon wealth, services to the state and the people (particularly military achievement) and, or so the individual with *auctoritas* would claim, the moral authority that he possessed because of his character.

augur A priest who interpreted **auspices** to determine the will of the gods.

auspices Signs from the gods in the form of the flight patterns of birds, requiring interpretation.

auxiliary A non-citizen, non-**legionary** soldier in the Roman army.

Bona Dea The Good Goddess, whose festival, organised by the **Vestals**, could be celebrated only by women.

boni See **optimates**.

Campus Martius The Field of Mars, a large area outside the **pomerium** where **magisterial** elections took place (see **Saepta**) and where armies gathered before and after campaigns.

Caesarian A supporter of Julius Caesar; similarly, there were Marians, Sullans, Pompeians and Antonians.

censors Two senior politicians elected for eighteen months, in principle every five years (but many five-year periods passed without the election of censors), to take a census of the population and review the composition of

the **Senate**.

clementia Mercifulness, in particular readiness to forgive political enemies; a characteristic particularly demonstrated by Julius Caesar during and after the Civil War.

client The inferior in a relationship of mutual benefit and obligations. Clients might be seen by their **patrons'** houses in the morning or accompany them down the street to show their wealth and influence, canvass and vote for their patrons, or do them political favours if they were themselves important men.

client ruler Client kings and queens ruled their kingdoms without interference in internal affairs, but were obliged to work for the interests of Rome in foreign policy, in return for military protection.

clientela A network of **clients** (plural *clientelae*).

collegia, colleges Associations of citizens, including the Colleges of **Pontiffs** and **Augurs** and other religious bodies, but most often of working men, similar to guilds; politicised by Clodius.

colony A settlement of Roman citizens outside Rome.

comitia A formal meeting of Roman citizens to pass laws or elect a magistrate.

comitia centuriata Assembly where citizens voted in their military centuries, units divided on class lines that reflected the roles of different classes within the army. It elected **consuls** and **praetors** and **censors** and met on the **Campus Martius** outside the *pomerium* to reflect its military origins.

comitia tributa Assembly where citizens voted in their tribes (the thirty-five originally geographical divisions of citizens). It elected the **curule aediles** and **quaestors**.

commercium The citizen's right to enter into legally enforceable contracts.

concilium plebis The **Plebeian** Assembly, arranged into tribes like the *comitia tributa* but excluding the **patricians**, which elected the **tribunes** and **plebeian aediles** and passed *plebiscita*, laws which, although not passed by the whole citizen body, were binding on all citizens like the laws passed by the other assemblies.

concordia ordinum The Harmony of the Orders as defined by Cicero in 63, all groups in society working together for the benefit of Rome.

connubium The citizen's right to form a legally binding marriage contract.

consilium A group of advisers to a **magistrate**.

consuls The chief **magistrates**. Two annually elected officials holding *imperium*.

consulars Those who had been **consuls**.

consules suffecti **Consuls** appointed by an *interrex* during the **Republic**, by Augustus in his reign. They were replacements for a consul after the beginning of the year; a suffect consul enjoyed less prestige than a consul who was in office on 1 January, as suffects did not give their name to the year.

contio An informal political meeting summoned by a **magistrate**, often a **tribune** (plural *contiones*).

curator A person with a specific designated responsibility, e.g. for the grain or water supply, usually over a period longer than the year that **magistrates** spent in office (plural *curatores*).

Curia The Senate House; the building itself was sacrosanct.

cursus honorum The ladder of **magisterial** offices. curule chair A folding stool, originally made of ivory. **Magistrates** with *imperium* sat on a curule chair to symbolise their power.

denarius A unit of currency, worth four **sesterces**. The *denarius* coin was the commonest silver coin.

dictatorship Office, usually lasting six months, granted to one man during an emergency. A dictator's powers could not be checked by any other **magistrate** or by **tribunician** veto. A dictator held the *imperium* of two **consuls**.

dignitas A man's claim to be respected and recognised, based upon his pedigree, wealth and achievements; more closely linked with official status and offices held than *auctoritas*.

divination Discovering the will of the gods, usually through signs and omens.

divisores Electoral agents responsible for the distribution of bribes.

dominatio The relationship of a master to a slave. In political terms it meant absolute or tyrannical power.

do ut des The **patron/client** relationship worked using this principle: I give in order that you may give back. edict A decree issued by an authority and so having some legal force, but not a law.

equestrian A member of the class of *equites*; something concerning or connected with the *equites*.

equites The wealthiest class of Roman citizens who were not **senators**.

Etruscans The people who lived to the north and west of Rome, in the area now known in English as Tuscany. They ruled over Rome in its very early history and were thought to have supplied Rome's last two kings before the **Republic** was established. They had a marked influence on Roman culture: gladiatorial contests originated with the Etruscans.

fama Reputation.

fascēs The symbolic bundle of rods carried by the **lictors** who attended the **magistrates** with *imperium*; it demonstrated the power of the magistrate to impose punishment. Holders of higher offices had an axe in the middle of the bundle of rods, showing that their power extended to capital punishment.

fasti Annual lists, usually of **consuls** or **Triumphators**.

filibuster To 'talk out' a proposal by making a speech so long that there is no time left to vote; a favourite political technique of Cato's.

flamen A priest devoted to one particular god (plural *flamines*).

forum The open area in the centre of Italian cities, a combination of central

market place and civic centre. The 'Forum' (capital F), if otherwise unspecified, refers to the original forum of Rome, the Forum Romanum. freedman A freed ex-slave (also 'freedwoman').

Games See **Ludi**.

genius The divine spirit of a person or place (plural *genii*).

gratia Influence, importance.

Hellenistic Referring to the Greeks in the period between the conquests of Alexander the Great in the late fourth century and the death of Cleopatra in 30, and to the kingdoms of the Eastern Mediterranean into which Alexander's empire split after his death, ruled by Greek dynasties.

hostis An enemy, either a foreign enemy or a Roman declared to be an enemy of the state or 'public enemy'; *ahostis* had no rights and his killer would not be punished (plural *hostes*).

Ides The third of the three fixed days in each Roman calendar month. The Ides fell two Roman eight-day weeks before the end of the month, that is, on the 13th in most months and on the 15th of the long months March, May, July and October.

imperator Originally a word shouted as a sign of respect from troops to their commander after victory in battle; a general so addressed by his troops could take the word as a temporary title.

imperial province A **province** within the area given to the emperor to rule during the **Principate**. This area covered most of the Empire and, eventually, all provinces with any military importance. Governors within the imperial provinces were, technically speaking, only *legati*, i.e. they were deputising for the emperor.

imperium Supreme authority held by senior **magistrates**, the right to take immediate decisions without consultation, always associated with offices that were (at least in origin) military. **Dictators, consuls, praetors, Masters of the Horse and curule aediles** held *imperium*.

in absentia The right to stand for office without attending the elections in person.

incestum Sexual relations between those for whom marriage would be illegal, e.g. incest or sex with a **Vestal Virgin**; after the **Bona Dea** scandal, also the violation of the prohibitions associated with virgin goddesses, e.g. male invasion of their sacred rites.

intercalary A month inserted into a calendar to get it back in line with the seasons.

intercessio The right of veto possessed by **tribunes**.

interrex A **patrician** appointed by the **Senate** for five days in the absence of **consuls** to arrange consular elections.

iudicia Justice.

ius Right, law.

lares The ancestral spirits of a family, worshipped at a shrine within the house, the *lararium*.

lares compitales Gods of the crossroads; each crossroads in Rome had its own set of *lares*.

latifundia Large-scale farms using tenant and slave labour. Technically, a *latifundium* was a mixed farm in which crops were grown and animals reared; large-scale farms devoted to one activity, e.g. vine-growing, were villa estates.

legatus, legate Assistant to a commander or governor, with delegated ***imperium***; in Augustus' reign, a legionary commander or governor of an imperial province, since the official commander or governor was the emperor himself (plural *legati*).

legion A body of legionnaires, heavily armed citizen infantry soldiers, approximately 5,000 strong.

libertas Freedom from tyrannical rule, the freedom of the people, personal freedom.

lictor The attendant of a **magistrate** with ***imperium***; carried *fascēs*.

ludi Entertainments as part of a religious festival. The traditional English translation 'Games' is misleading, since they were theatrical shows as often as sports.

magister equitum The Master of the Horse, deputy to a **dictator**. magistrate Anyone elected to a position of political power; not, as in the modern English usage, a kind of judge. The adjective is 'magis-terial'.

maiestas (minuta) Treason.

maius imperium Power superior to that of other holders of ***imperium*** in a given area.

Master of the Horse See ***magister equitum***.

modius A measure of volume for dry goods: one-third of the capacity of the large Roman jars called *amphorae*, about two gallons or nine litres.

municipium A community with partial Roman citizenship, ***sine suffragio***; the local **magistrates**, however, were often given Roman citizenship (plural *municipia*).

mos maiorum Rome's ancestral customs.

nobilis, noble Member of the *nobilitas*, i.e. a descendant of a **consul** (plural *nobiles*).

nomen Latinum A Latin ally (see Introduction).

novus homo A 'new man', from the first generation of his family to enter the **Senate** (plural *novi homines*).

oligarchy Any political system in which power is officially or unofficially restricted to a small group, whether inheritors of land (aristocracy), the rich (plutocracy), priests (hierarchy), generals (junta) or others.

optimates/optimates Those **senators** who believed in the collective supremacy of the **Senate**. They called themselves the *boni*, the 'good men'.

optimo iure Possessing full political and private rights.

orbis (terrarum) The whole world (as the Romans thought it was, so not including America, the Pacific or sub-Saharan Africa).

ordo, order One of the classes into which Roman society was divided, based on the value of property owned (plural *ordines*).

ovation A parade awarded for military success, similar to a **Triumph** but not as prestigious; generals who had won victories over slaves or pirates, for example, rather than a foreign state, could receive only an ovation.

paterfamilias The head of a Roman household; even a man who was the father of a family would not be a *paterfamilias* if his own father was still alive.

pater/parens patriae Father of the Country or Fatherland. An honorary title.

patricians Those who claimed descent from the earliest nobility of Rome.

Certain priesthoods could be held only by them, but by the late **Republic** no political offices were restricted to patricians. They could not be **tribunes** or vote in the *concilium plebis*.

patron The superior in a relationship of mutual benefit and obligations.

Patrons might offer their **clients** food, money, work or loans. The patron–client relationship was based on the principle *do ut des*, ‘I give in order that you may give back’.

penates Gods of thresholds and store cupboards, worshipped within the household together with the *lares*.

peninsular Italy That part of Italy surrounded on three sides by sea, that is, the area south of Pisae (Pisa) in the west and Ariminum (Rimini) in the East.

The area north of this that is part of modern Italy was, in ancient times, Cisalpine Gaul. Italy in the late **Republic** did not include this area, Sicily or Sardinia, and was, therefore, much smaller than the modern country.

people, the See *plebs urbana*.

People, The See *populus Romanus*.

pietas Dutifulness: doing one’s duty towards gods, family and country.

plebeian Not of **patrician** status.

Plebeian Assembly See *concilium plebis*.

plebiscita Resolutions of the **Plebeian Assembly** with the binding force of law.

plebs urbana Roman citizens living in Rome not in the **senatorial** or **equestrian** class. Not to be confused with **plebeians**, who comprised all Romans, including **nobles**, who were not **patricians**, or with the modern colloquial term ‘pleb’: the *plebs urbana* included all but the richest Romans. ‘The people’ in Roman history means the *plebs urbana*.

pomerium Rome’s sacred boundary; armed men were not normally permitted to cross this boundary into the city (alternative spelling *pomoerium*).

pontiff A priest, adviser to **Senate** and **People** on matters of religion.

pontifex maximus The chief priest, head of the **College** of **Pontiffs**, elected for life.

populus Romanus The whole Roman citizen body, including **patricians** and those living outside Rome. Not to be confused with the **plebeians** or the *plebs urbana*. In English, ‘the People’ (capital P).

popularis Senators who believed that the **tribunes** and **Assemblies** should play an important role in Roman politics; opponents of the **optimates** (plural *populares*).

potestas (1) The power held by the lesser **magistrates**, which did not give them the freedom of decision enjoyed by holders of *imperium*. (2) A word that indicates the powers of an office; Augustus frequently had assigned to him the *potestas* of an office (the **ensorship**, **tribunate** or **consulship**) without holding the office itself.

praetor One of a number of annually elected **magistrates** holding *imper-ium*. Their duties were mainly judicial.

praetor urbanus The most important of the **praetors**, the chief **magistrate** for the administration of justice, who heard cases between citizens and took charge of the city in the absence of the **consuls**: because of this, the *praetor urbanus* could not leave Rome for more than ten days at a time. Like all praetors, he had responsibility for producing a set of *ludi*, in his case the Ludi Apollinares.

praetorian guard In the **Republic**, a general's bodyguard; in Augustus' reign it became an elite part of the army, accompanying the emperor on campaign, based near Rome.

prefect A 'man put in charge', someone appointed by a more powerful man to perform a particular task, not a **magistrate** or **promagistrate**.

primus inter pares First among equals: one exercising temporary power according to the principles of shared responsibility and limited individual power upon which the **Republic** was built.

princeps A leading man within a community (plural *principes*). In the **Principate**, 'the Princeps' means the emperor.

princeps civitatis The most important citizen in Rome.

princeps senatus The chief **senator**, the elder statesman of the **Senate**, who had the right to speak first.

Principate The period of the earlier emperors, that is, of the rule of one leading man. Older books refer to this period as the 'Roman Empire', using the term Empire to indicate the rule of emperors, but it is very confusing to use the word Empire to refer both to a place (Rome and its conquered territories) and to a time (the period following the **Republic**).

privatus A private citizen, an individual not currently holding a **magistracy**.

privati cum imperio Non-**magistrates** with *imperium*, who could replace governors if no **promagistrate** was available immediately.

proconsul See **promagistrate**.

procurator An **equestrian** or **freedman** appointed by the emperor to take care of financial business, especially one who looked after the finances of an **imperial province**; he was not subject to the authority of the governor, but reported directly to the emperor.

promagistrate One given a grant of *imperium* with the status of a **consul** (proconsul) or **praetor** (propraetor), to enable him either to rule in a

province or command a military campaign or both.

proscription Condemning political enemies to death and confiscating their estates by publishing their names on a list and rewarding those who hunted them down.

province Originally, the scope of a specific task assigned to a Roman **magistrate** or **promagistrate**; later, specifically the geographical area assigned to a governor, and so an area within the Empire.

provocatio The citizen's right of appeal against the act of a Roman **magistrate**.

public enemy See *hostis*.

public province A **province** under the **Principate** whose governor was still appointed by the **Senate**, not part of the area under the direct control of the emperor. Known as 'senatorial provinces' in older books, a term that is now severely frowned upon.

publicani Companies of *equites* involved in tax collecting or other large public projects.

quaestio A permanent criminal court (plural *quaestiones*).

quaestorship The first step on the ladder of offices, the most junior **magistracy** that secured entry to the **Senate**; the duties were mainly financial.

regnum Monarchy.

repetundae The recovery of goods and wealth extorted from provincials (often found in the ablative form, *repetundis*).

Republic, Republican A republic is a state without a monarch; Republicans were opponents of Caesar and Augustus: they wished to return to the days of collegial **Senate** government before over-mighty generals or one-man rule. The Roman Republic was said to have been established in 509 with the expulsion of the last king of Rome, ceased to exist in any meaningful way when Julius Caesar was appointed to a perpetual dictatorship in 44, and was ended in the 20s with the introduction of the **Principate** by Augustus.

rex A king.

Rostra The speakers' platforms in the **Forum**, from which politicians addressed the people.

Sacred Way The road leading from the edge of the city to the Capitol in Rome, down which a general and his army processed in a **Triumph**.

sacrosanctity See **tribunician sacrosanctity**.

Saepta The voting area on the **Campus Martius** where elections were held.

SCU See *senatus consultum ultimum*.

Senate Originally a body of advisers to the kings, then of ex-magistrates who advised current **magistrates**. They could issue decrees and produce Bills but not, technically, pass laws, although in many areas, especially finance and foreign affairs, the people's assemblies tended to bow to their judgement, to such an extent that a Senate decree might be acted upon

even when it had not been passed into law by an assembly.

senator Member of the **Senate**.

senatus consultum ultimum (SCU) The emergency decree of the **Senate**. Also known as the SCU. It gave the **consul** power to take whatever measures he deemed necessary in the circumstances to restore order.

sestertius The basic Roman unit of currency (in the plural, the English form of the word is used: sesterces).

Seven Hills The original seven hills of Rome, the Quirinal, Viminal, Esquiline, Caelian, Capitoline, Palatine and Aventine. Of course, by the end of this period Rome had expanded hugely and included other hills such as the Pincian, and the Vatican and Janiculan hills across the Tiber.

sine suffragio Without voting rights.

socii Italici Rome's Italian allies who had no political or private rights but were expected to fight for Rome.

solar calendar The 'real' calendar, that is to say, the division of the year into seasons. Before Julius Caesar's reform, the official Roman calendar was often out of step with the solar calendar, e.g. October might be midwinter. See **intercalary months**.

spolia opima Spoils given to a commander of a Roman army who had killed in single combat the ruler of a people at war with Rome.

standards The eagle-headed poles with flags carried by **legions**; to lose them in battle was the ultimate disgrace, and usually happened only after catastrophic defeat.

subsistence farming Growing food and keeping animals in order to provide for oneself and one's family, rather than in order to sell produce.

suffect consuls See **consules suffecti**.

sumptuary law A law restricting private expenditure.

supplicatio A public vote of thanks (plural *supplicationes*).

talent A measure of weight and currency. A Roman talent was 32.3 kg, so, since the *sestertius* was worth one-quarter of the value of the 4 g silver **denarius** coin, one talent of silver was worth 32,300 sesterces. The Greek silver talent was less heavy, worth 24,000–26,000 sesterces.

templum Any consecrated land in which any building stood, even a small shrine; note that the Latin word refers to the whole enclosure.

tithe A 10 per cent tax on produce.

toga praetexta Purple-bordered toga worn by office holders with **imperium**.

tribunes Ten annually elected **plebeians** who represented the interests of the plebeians in the Assembly. They did not have **imperium**, but they could veto any proposals, including those made by their fellow tribunes. There were also twenty-four elected military tribunes, junior officers who were attached to the legions.

tribuni aerarii The class just below the **equites** in wealth and rank.

tribunician sacrosanctity The divine protection given to the person of the **tribune**; during their office, **tribunes** were inviolable, that is, to attack

them physically was an offence against the gods.

Triumph Awarded to generals who had killed more than 5,000 enemies. The victorious army paraded through the city. A general celebrating a Triumph was a triumphator.

Tullianum Rome's prison and execution chamber. Also known as the Carcer, it was located in the **Forum**.

urban praetor See ***praetor urbanus***.

urbs City (often found in the dative form *urbi*).

Vestals Virgin priestesses of the virgin goddess Vesta, who looked after her sacred flame in the Temple of Vesta in the **Forum**. It was believed that if the flame went out, Rome would fall.

vigiles The nightwatchmen of Rome; the *vigiles* formed a military body whose primary duty was guarding against and putting out fires.

vigintiviri Young men holding their first office, on their way to a senatorial career, with various responsibilities.

villa estate See ***latifundia***.

vis Public violence (often found in the ablative form *vi*).

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